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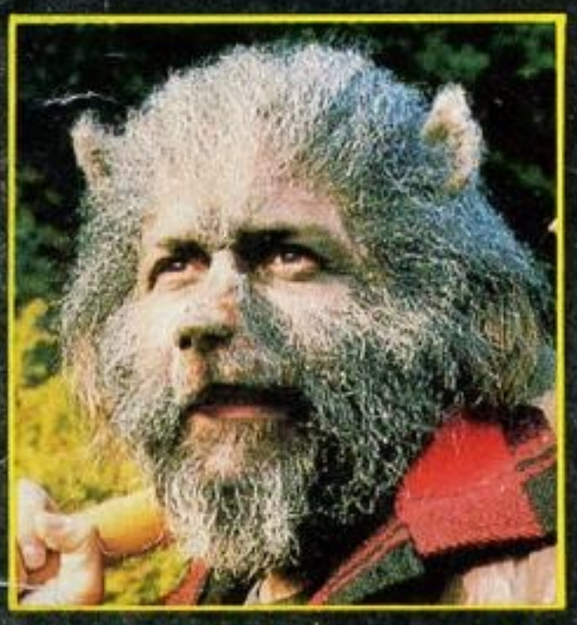

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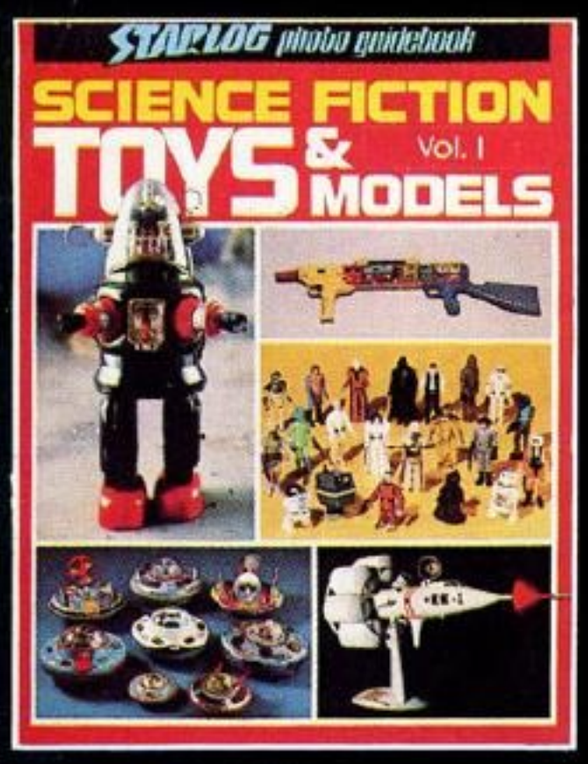

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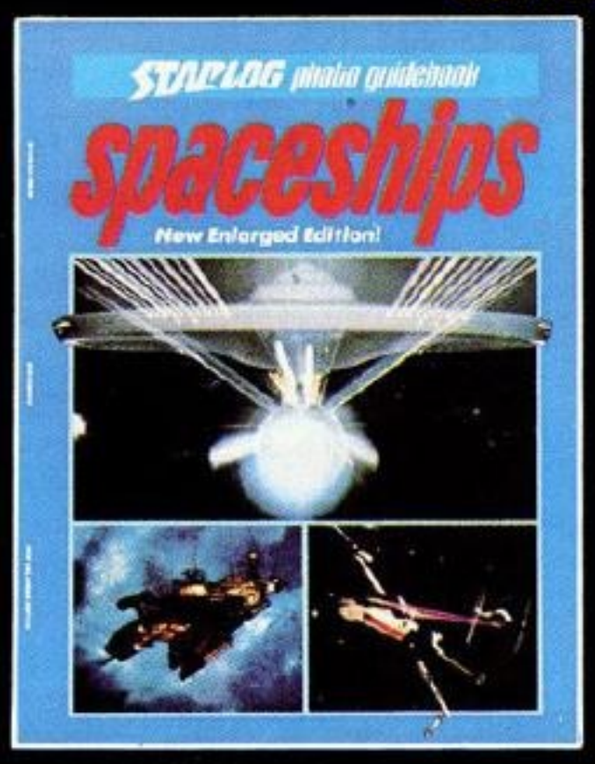

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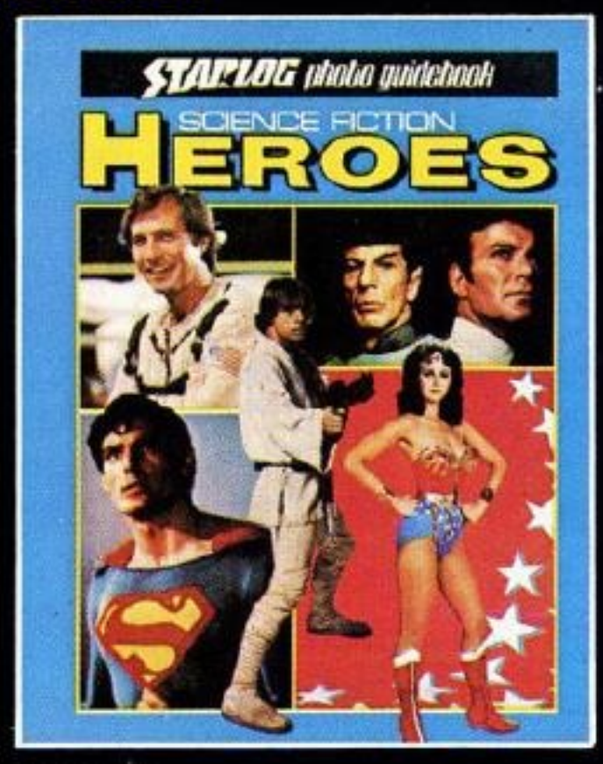

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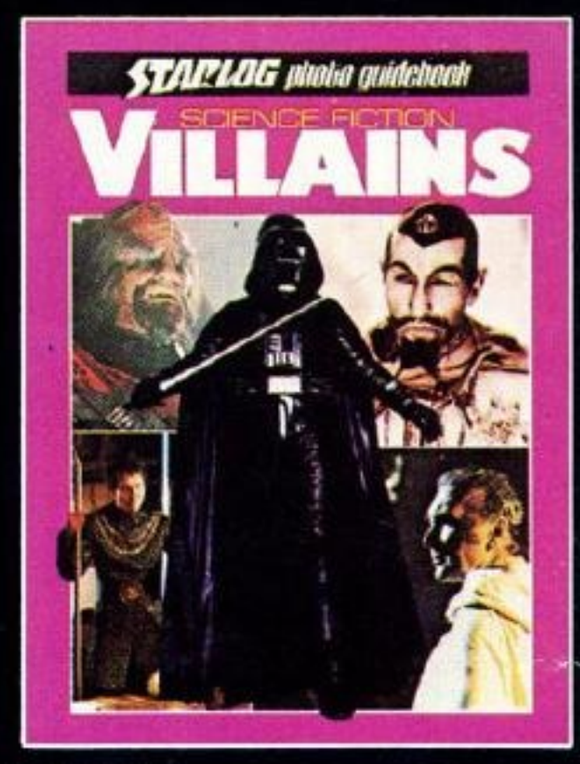

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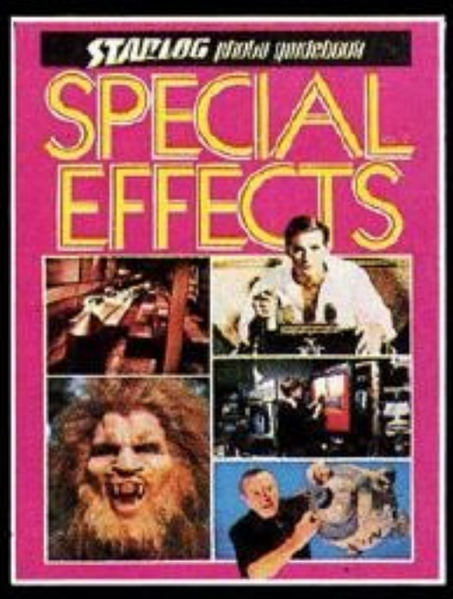

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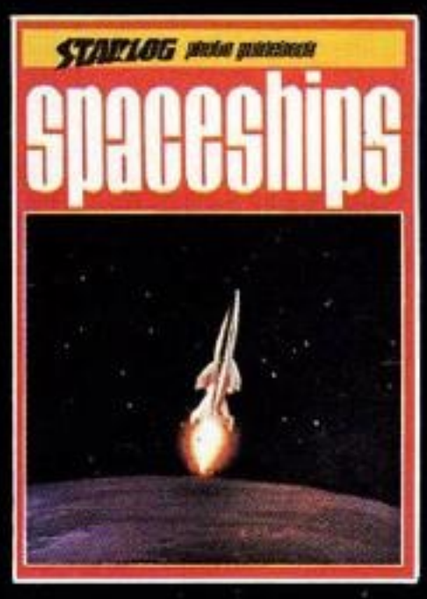

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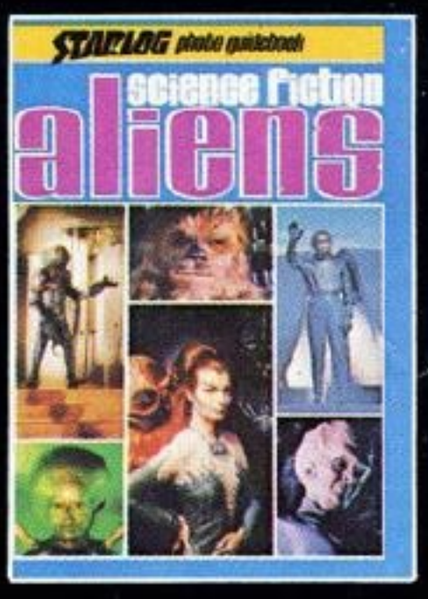

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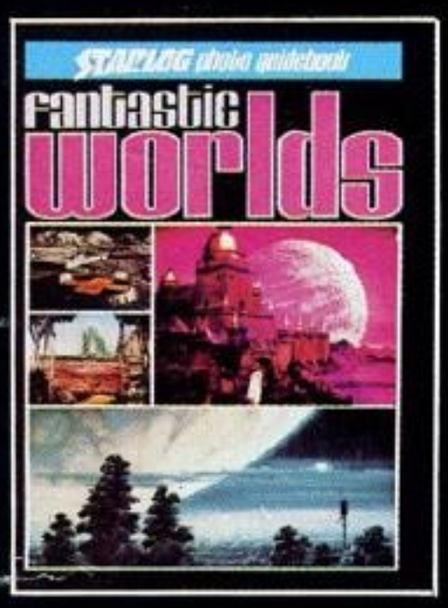

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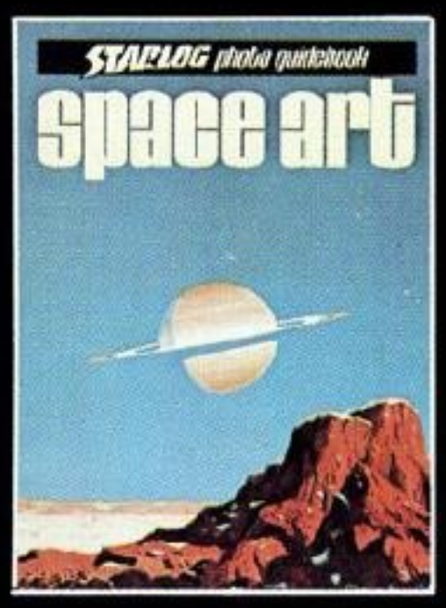

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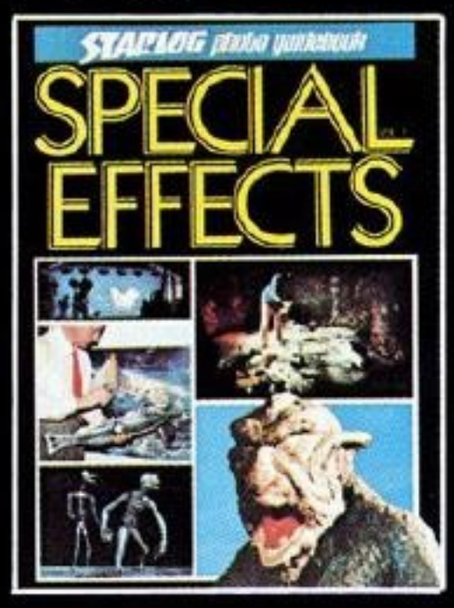

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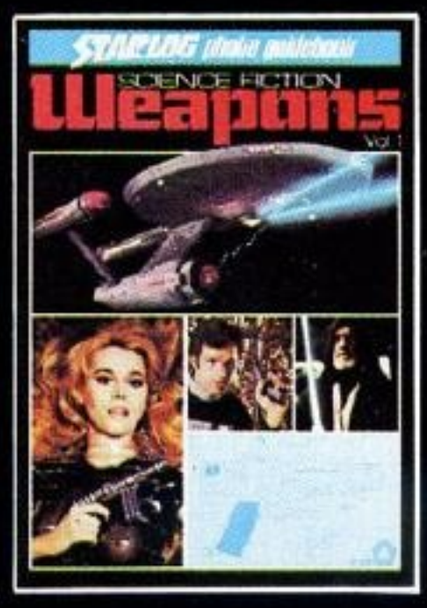

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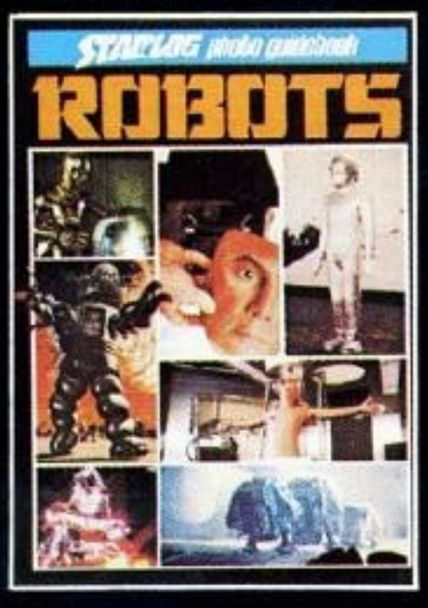

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FANGORIA

#12

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4 Imagination, Inc.
Bob Martin says he wrote this to settle the gore controversy. Fat chance.

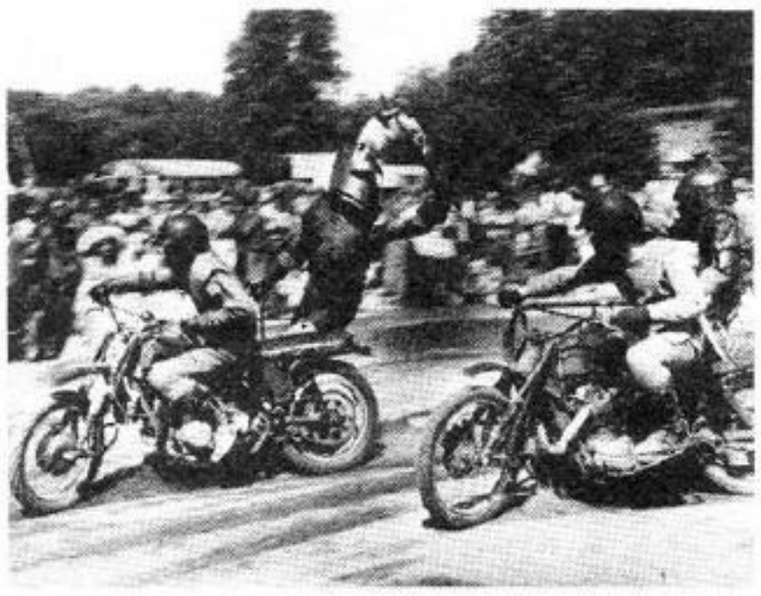
5 The Postal Zone
Readers sound off on gore, as Dick Smith discovers our biggest error ever. (No, it's not the time we used the electric toothbrush in a rainstorm.)

9 The Pit and the Pen of Alex Gordon
Alex remembers the great Boris Karloff!

10 Oliver Stone and "The Hand"
The Oscar-winning screenwriter of *Midnight Express* reveals the years of struggle behind his "sudden" success.

12 "Friday the 13th Part II"
OK, gore-freaks—this one's for you! Director Steve Miner promises more of the same, only better.

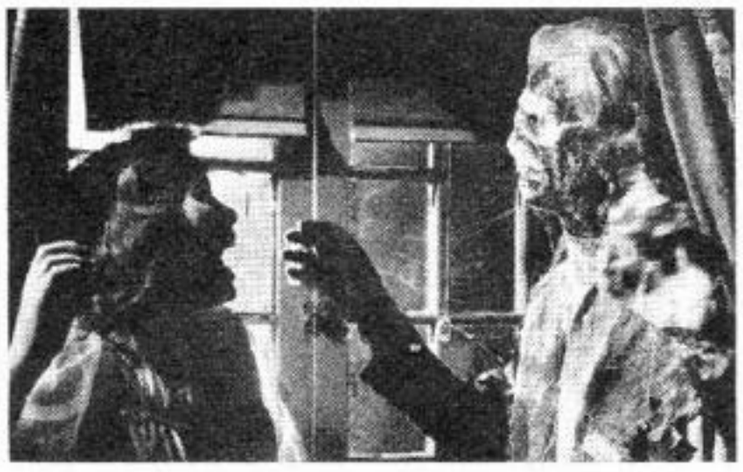
17 "Knightriders"
Something completely different from George Romero, everybody's favorite independent; and if you thought Savini did great effects, wait 'til you see him act!



20 The Cartoon Art of Robert McKimson
A remembrance of the neglected Warner Brothers animator who created Foghorn Leghorn, the Tasmanian Devil, and the fastest mouse in all of Mexico!

24 Hammer—1981
The reports of Hammer's death have been greatly exaggerated!

28 Roger Corman
The beginning of an extensive look at the career of America's most prolific director-producer of fantasy films.



34 William Castle
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38 The Real Tobe Hooper
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49 Elisabeth Brooks
The Howling's Marsha Quist launches our series on the femmes fatale of fantasy film!

52 Horror in the Comics
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56 "Clash of the Titans"
Harryhausen on the fine art of dimensional animation, with a look at the effects of his major new feature!

58 Monster Invasion
Bo Derek in *The Cat People?* Give us a break! Oh, well—at least there's a slim chance of a *Scanners* TV series . . .

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FANGORIA is published six times a year, in Feb., Apr., June, Aug., Oct., and Dec. by O'Quinn Studios, Inc., 475 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016. This is issue #12 Volume 2. (ISSN 0164-2111)

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FANGORIA

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This issue is dedicated to **Jim Burns,** happy birthday.

Production Assistants: Eileen Dempsey, Cindy Levine, David Gilman and Nancy Reichardt.

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Imagination Inc.

We've had enough! In the past two months, over 50% of the letters we've received concerned one topic—the question of graphic violence, as depicted in films and as it appears in FANGORIA's coverage of those films. In a number of brief replies in our previous letter columns, in the course of writing past editorials and, most of all, in the course of conversations with friends and acquaintances, I've found myself repeatedly explaining what "those pictures" are doing in the pages of FANGORIA. And I'm afraid I will have to continue explaining and arguing until the matter is laid to rest—which is the purpose of this editorial.

In issue #10, the article "An Anatomy of Terror" presented certain arguments for and against the use of graphic violence in films. Virtually everyone we spoke to agrees that there are films and filmmakers that use violence in a expert and responsible manner. Romero is the classic example, and, more recently, David Cronenberg has finally been recognised for the artistry in his methods of graphic shock. Romero, Cronenberg, Tobe Hooper, Wes Craven and others have been making horror films for years, and sharpening their skills with each picture. All of these men have attained some degree of "respectabilty" through their continued efforts. But what about their first pictures, and the initial impact that they had on both establishment critics *and* on the so-called "fan press?" Since there was no FANGORIA when these people made their directorial debuts (with *Night of the Living Dead*, 1968, *They Came From Within*, 1972, *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, 1974, and *Last House on the Left*, 1973), they were generally ignored—or met with derision. It was only after these men continued their work in the field of terror that these films were reappraised, and that their admirers developed the nerve to "come out of the closet."

In our first two years of existence, we have covered a lot of debut horror films from young directors. Perhaps none of the films we have covered will have the impact on the terror field that *Night of the Living Dead* or *Halloween* have had. But Cunningham, Kaufman, Coscarelli and others that we've brought to your attention will continue to make movies, and even if they didn't we would still have the right to be proud that we have sought out the new, independent filmmakers, while other film magazines remained utterly dependent upon the major studio releases and established independents.

In covering these people's work, we have chosen the most dramatic photos (some would say "sensational") to illustrate in our magazine. Of course we know that effective gore effects are not the most important aspect of horror films, but the same might be said of the hardware of SF. The real drama of *Star Wars* is in the relationship of its characters. But in a magazine like STARLOG, the most valued photos are those that convey *action*—the spacecraft, the computer consoles, the weaponry of the Rebels and the Empire. An actor's performance, or the quality of a script, or technical excellence in any stage of filmmaking seldom comes across in a still photo. What *can* be shown is the quality of the effects, and the nature of those effects.

Occasionally we get letters that tell us that we are encouraging crime by covering what have been called "murder movies" rather than horror films. I find it difficult to believe that a 90-minute movie, or a batch of stills in a movie magazine, is likely to send anyone down the path to Hell. Among horror fans, there may be a few souls so desperately wounded by life that they do confuse cinema nightmares with everyday reality. If so, I'm convinced that FANGORIA would be of more help than harm to such people. Our photos, however grisly, are accompanied by articles that stress the men *behind the scenes*—the screenwriters who conceive these horrors, the makeup men who produce the illusion, and the directors whose job is to convince us—just for a moment—that the illusion is real. Our message is that even the most terrifying film is only color, light and sound.

I'm certainly not saying that every reader of FANGORIA has to find such films enjoyable. We seldom cover more than one very graphic film in any single issue, and we didn't start this magazine with the intention of pleasing *everyone* all the time. Our job is to cover what's happening in the terror field right now, and no one will deny that graphic horror is a major part of the current scene.

We intend to continue doing our job—and enjoying it!

The letters on page 8 represent a wide range of viewpoints on this topic, and these will be the *last* letters on the subject that we'll be publishing for some time, unless we hear from someone with something totally *new* to say. Thanks to everyone who wrote to express their concern or their support. At least we all agree that FANGORIA is the World's Greatest Horror Film Magazine!

—Bob Martin

The Postal Zone

This Is Filler

Hi Kiddies, we're waiting for Bob Martin to think of something witty to say here but the message remains the same. We still want you folks to write in and tell us what you think about the magazine. So please, write us and speak your mind.

You can always find us at:

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475 Park Ave. South, 8th Floor Ste.
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Letter From the Editors

. . . After two years of making every effort inhumanly possible to keep the cover price of FANGORIA at $1.95, we have finally had to submit to the pressures of inflation. Starting with the issue you hold in your hands, FANGORIA's newsstand price will be $2.25. Judging from the mail we receive, most of you are fully aware of our policy to give you maximum value for the lowest possible cover price: we will continue to do so to the best of our abilities.

With our next issue, our subscription prices will rise in proportion to our cover price, so if you've been thinking of subscribing, *now* is the time!

Wrong Head

Your interview with Tom Schwartz on "SCANNERS" in issue #11 has errors regarding my work which I would like to correct.

You reported that Tom said that I never used gelatin. The fact is that I first learned about gelatin appliances from John Carradine in 1947. Mr. Carradine, an expert at make-up, used to make his own. Later I read about the early use of gelatin for facial prostheses in medical books and, with that knowledge, in 1964 I worked out a number of ways that young amateurs could use gelatin in my *Monster Make-Up Handbook*. Then in 1975 I designed two monster make-up kits for Pressman Toy Company in which gelatin appliances could be made in two-piece vacuum-formed molds. Also in 1975, I used a gelatin appliance on Roy Scheider's hand in *Marathon Man* when a wire cut into it. A year later, for *The Sentinel*, I used a gelatin formulation in the eye area of a dummy head for a knife-stab-in-the-eye effect. I am currently using gelatin for an effect in *Ghost Story*.

At the begining of the *Scanners* production, I advised the make-up artists to talk to Tom Burman because he had made many terrific gelatin heads with a formula of mine which he had improved. Perhaps Tom Schwartz misunderstood.

The second error states, "Dick made an articulated fiberglass head. As the pressure builds up, the face begins to bleed then the resin glue eyes explode outward."

I did make a polyester resin head of Steven Lack that had breakable resin eyes which were blown out. But the head was not articulated and it was not used for any bleeding effects. Blood was added to it to duplicate prior effects. All the effects except the exploding eyes were done on the actors.

Finally, the photo, bottom left, page 11, has a caption which implies that it is the dummy head I made of Steven Lack. It is not. I do not know who did that make-up or head. I enclose a photo of the head I made. Please do not attribute make up work to me without checking it with me.

Dick Smith

Mr. Smith has received our personal apologies in a letter. Our apologies go out to our readers as well, especially for the totally inaccurate caption that accompanied the photo of a test makeup on Stephen Lack that was never used for the picture. Smith's real work on that closing Scanners sequence is visible on page 58.

Disappearing Act

. . . Although I dislike sticking my head into such business, can you tell me if FANGORIA is facing bad times? It's disappeared from three local newsstands that used to carry it all the time! It seems I'll be sending in a subscription order shortly — as far as I can see, no issues are available on Long Island!

Raymond Young
The Magick Theater
51C Old Oak Lane
Levittown, NY 11756

If we're missing from your local stands, sales are not the reason—we're in our biggest growth period ever! It could be that we're a quick sell-out in your area, or perhaps someone in the distribution end just isn't doing his job. You've hit on the right solution—subscription is the only way to be sure you won't miss an issue.

The New Guy

Dear Bob Greenberger,

. . . I'd like to say Hi, I'm glad you're working on FANGORIA and I welcome you. Your article on *Mother's Day* and Charles Kaufman was fabulous—the best ever.

I'm planning on making my own film one day: I write a lot and when I saw *Mother's Day* it was the perfect horror film in my eyes.

Tim Brady
93 Manor Lane
Willingboro, NJ 08046

Dear Bob,

. . . I am disappointed with the photos from *Mother's Day*. Since the movie was released, I anxiously awaited those wonderfully gory pictures and coverage, but when I got issue #10 there was no gore—why?

Kris Druhm
608 Silvan Avenue
Bayport, NY 11705

We would have gladly shown the you the infamous Drano sequence, but such photos (if they exist) were not available. The film's marketer, Donald Velde, Inc., even billed us for some of the material we received from them!

Dear FANGORIA,

. . . I don't know if this is in your reach, but if you could get in touch with United Film Distribution, could you please request them to re-release their hit, *Mother's Day*, soon, because it only played in my theater for about 1½ weeks!

Guy Rusiski
Pittsburgh, PA

Better yet, we spoke with writer-director Charles Kaufman who tells us the movie will be re-released just in time for the real Mother's Day. Take the family.

Kaufman also tells us he's working on a new film and the details on that can be found in our Count Fangor newsletter, available to subscribers only.

Craves Criticism

. . . Since the first issue of FANGORIA, there has been a running argument concerning the place for film *criticism* in your pages. I would like to add a little fuel to the fire with my own thoughts on this subject. First, let me say that I have little but praise for the magazine. Its existence is a major breakthrough for those of us who truly love the so-called "horror" genre. Only one other American magazine, Clarke's *Cinefantastique*, gives serious consideration to the fright film. However, as admirable as it is, FANGORIA is not quite perfect. I've noticed the tendency to cover such embarassing films as *Prophecy*, *Friday the 13th*, *Saturn 3* and *Star Trek—The Motion Picture* in the same glowing terms as the gems, wuch as *Dawn of the Dead*, *Phantasm*, and *The Shining*. In addition, there is the duty to inform the public about films which are just plain *bad*.

Regarding the argument concerning SF cover age in a "fantasy" magazine, I tend to side with letter writers Goodrich, Casell, Kelly and Angell: we already have STARLOG to deal with these films—best they are left there. The true fan

The Postal Zone

or student of the horror film is interested in the development of interpersonal relationships between the characters, and not in the development of hardware.

Michael I. Hughes
7224 Claybeck Drive
Dayton, OH 45424

We've never gone much into the hardware of SF, unless you count evil robots. Anyway, we seemed to have developed into a "straight horror" mag. For the past several issues, articles of SF and fantasy have been pretty few—expect this trend to continue.

We've gone into our reasons for not indulging in film criticism in previous letter columns. There's certainly a lot more to be said about it, and perhaps a future editorial will say it. Meanwhile, we do publish very brief films reviews as part of CASTLE FANGOR, free newsletter available only to FANGORIA subscribers (see our subscription ad, page 16).

What If?

Dear Fango,

. . . What if the USC film school had a big class reunion—and at the same time New World Pictures had a big party and invited everyone who ever made a film for them . . . .

And suppose both parties were held in the same big hotel?

If anything happened to that building, you guys would sure be in trouble!

A Friend

Until we received your letter, we were only worried about earthquakes.

Justified Jumps

Dear FANGORIA,

. . . Why do you have the irritating habit of "(continued on page 49)?" We begin an article and, low and behold, at the bottom of the page we have to turn to the back of the magazine for the end of the article. Fair enough if there is only one column left, but more often than not there seems to be no reason for this.

Rick Scully
26/3 McDonald Street
Potts Point NSW 2011
Australia

You'll find that most of the articles that "jump" (as magazine folks call it) are articles that begin with color pages and end in black and white. We have four color sections in each isue—but sometimes we have seven or eight articles that call for color coverage! We never "jump" without a good reason.

But It's Still a Lousy Book

Dear Fans of Gore,

. . . Your article on *The Howling* was interesting. But Dante doesn't know what the Hell he is talking about. Cutting out the rape sequence from the novel was a mistake. She couldn't make love to her husband because of the rape, so he turned to Marcia Luria. Also the Full Moon secquence is crap, in the book it states and I quote:

"They can change any night, one the sun has gone down."

So the book doesn't dwell for months and the people aren't stupid. Werewolves aren't just accepted. Please show Mr. Dante this letter and tell him to look on page 119, and this should make him eat his words.

Alan Huffines
1313 Carolina
Graham, TX 76046

A Disappointing 10

Dear Editors,

. . . I'm really disappointed with issue #10. This is why:

The pictures were terrible. The only good one was the picture on the cover. You didn't review any good movies either.

I loved all the other issues but hated this one . . . .I spent almost all of my allowance on this cruddy issue. I'm going to continue buying this magazine, but if they're the same, bye-bye FANGORIA!

Reid Coker
5703 Woodlawn Ct.
Peoria, IL 61614

We're sorry you didn't like #10. we enjoyed it a lot. In the future, can you be more specific about what in the magazine bothers you?

When Is an X an R?

Dear Mr. Martin,

. . . There has been something that I've wanted to find out desperately. Recently I've noticed something very strange. As a horror fan, I have many horror books and in the books they show the advertising posters for many horror films and they announce many of the films as being rated "X" and some of them should be "G."

Some examples are *King Kong vs. Godzilla, The Evil of Frankenstein* and so on. Could you please explain why these movies have been advertised this way?

Todd Feldman
"The Gore Maniac"
18 Valley Forge Drive
E. Brunswick, N.J. 08816

Well Todd, the posters you have seen are from the British releases of certain films. The ratings systems over in England is somewhat different and their "X Certificate" is equivalent to America's R. Their standards also differ, which explains why some of the G films get the X.

Count Fangor's Fate

Dear Fangy,

. . . Don't listen to Bruce Afran. I think Count Fangor should stay with the staff. I think he deserves that full color page. I think Howard Cruse is a good artist.

The comic strip gives a change of pace to the horror mag and last of all, Howard Cruse doesn't want to be out of a job.

Scott Gunther
14 Gabriel Drive
Peekskill, N.Y. 10566

The very talented Mr. Howard Cruse will never be out of work. Starting with this issue, however, we're loosening up the rigid format that has held the Count to the every-issue, full-page strip, and we've asked Howard to experiment with him a bit in issues to come. Let us know what you think!

How about articles on . . .

Dear Mr. Greenberger,

. . . Congratulations on your debut as FANGORIA's managing editor and also on your recent marriage. I too am a long-time fan of both horror and comics, and I will be gald to see more comics coverage in the pages of FANGORIA.

Randy Turnbull
2195 Jamie Drivè
Memphis, Tenn. 38116

As of this issue, Ron Goulart will be giving us many details on the great horror comics of the past. When that's over, Bob may or may not write about the current state of the art. A lot depends on reader reaction. Please write in if we should be covering horror in the comics in articles and in Monster Invasions

Scan Mail

Dear FANGORIA,

. . . I recently saw David Cronenberg's *Scanners*. It was an excellent flick, the best in years. In #9 in the section Things to Come, it shows two pictures from *Scanners*. I don't remember this scene from the movie, cause I was looking for it and I didn't go get popcorn. Why wasn't it in the movie?

Ed Stalter
3-A 6th Street
Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 07632

As we mentioned in our coverage, the ending was entirely reshot with the aid of Dick Smith's amazing make-up work. The pictures we printed were from the original ending, one you'll never see.

Dear Bob and Bob,

. . . Well, I just finished issue #10 and I want to congratulate you on 10 great issues: I remember picking up issue #1 and from then on I've been hooked., keep up the good work.

I saw *Scanners* and was utterly thrilled. It was fantastic and so was your coverage.

Dan McManus
19 Riverside Drive
Rochester, New York 14613

A Blaisdell Correction

Dear FANGORIA,

. . . May I offer a correction on Randy Palmer's otherwise excellent article on Paul Blaisdell? Roger Corman's first feature was not *The Beast with a Million Eyes*, as noted by Mr. Palmer. It was *Monster From the Ocean Floor*, released by Corman's American Releasing Corp. in 1954. Incidentally, the "Monster" for this film was created by Bob Baker of "Bob Baker's Marionettes," later famed for his creation of the "puppet" alien in *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*.

Scot W. Holton
Varese Sarabande Records, Inc.
N. Hollywood, CA

(continued on page 16)

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that seek to destroy your mind and soul

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and win fame and treasure

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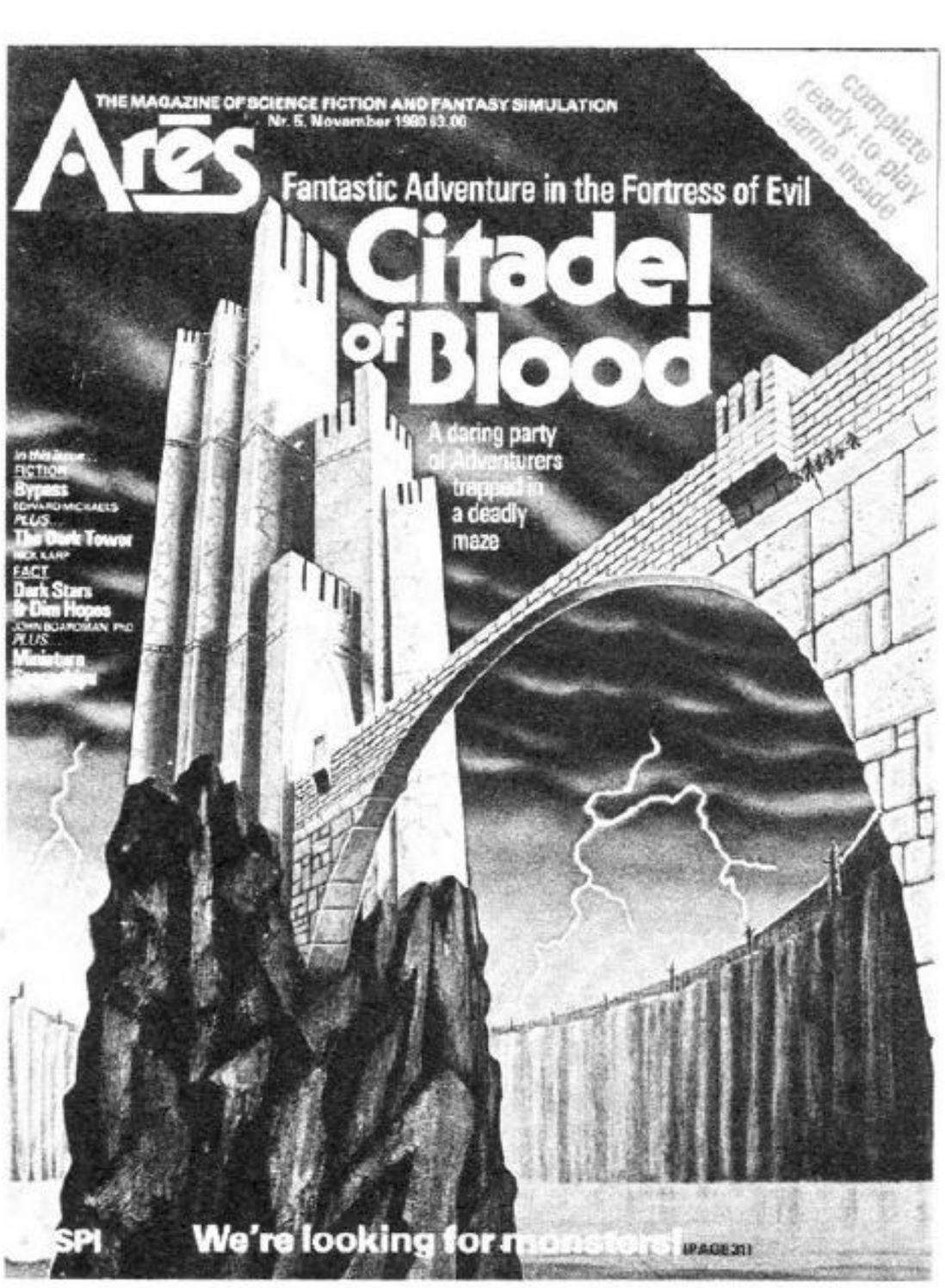

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The Readers on Gore

Dear FANGORIA,

. . . First of all, while I am no devotee of "gore movies," I do think that FANGORIA should continue to cover these films, at least the more important ones, as they are now so much a part of the horror genre. However, it might be wise if you exercised restraint in your selection of photos. Printing page after page of sickening mayhem not only tends to make FANGORIA look like an S&M rag, it undoubtedly gives away many of the film's key scenes, thus cheating the potential viewer of whatever scares the film has to offer.

However, I must admit, you do seem to be taking your readers' criticisms to heart. There was only one (very minor) "gore" photo in the entire issue of FANGORIA #10—not counting the cover, which was comparatively mild, and even a bit humorous. Congratulations, you're on the right track.

Randy Turnbull
2195 Jamie Drive
Memphis, Tenn. 38116

Dear Bob,

. . . My grudge is against those awful movies that have gore just for the sake of having gore and to pick up a quick buck. These films are cheaply made, horribly directed and acted, and the gore scenes are usually unconvincing. It seems to me that the men that make films like these must hate women, 'cause the females are always the victims. Maybe they feel insecure about independant women, and feel the need to live out their fantasies.

Castle Stall
East of Ye Village of Orford, WI

Dear Editor,

. . . At first your magazine didn't include any coverage of these films, then gradually you began to cover them. Now I have no objection to limited coverage but to disect them (no pun intended) ad nauseum is going overboard. Not only do these films lack plots or characterizations, but they all seem xeroxed from the same machine. Sure I can see the skill and talent that goes into make-up and such, but this alone does not make a fright film.

I'd also like to voice my disappointment in your seeming endorsement of these films for kids, "they're better than drugs or alcohol" is the general cause.

Pierre Comtois
18 Desrosiers St.
Lowell, MA 01850

Dear FANGORIANS,

. . . What is wrong with all these wimps that write in on the pictures you have in your magazine? I can't watch a horror film without knowing about it first, not like *Dracula* and Frankenstein but these new films coming out like *Friday the 13th*, *Zombie* or these other real gory films.

From these pictures I can get used to seeing the blood, gore, etc. in the movies, and know how it's done. I gave a report in English on *Maniac* and the class loved it! I got a 98 for the grade but it was the best one in the class. That article (#7) really helped my grade.

Wilson Shab
310 Inspiration Way
Del Rio, TX 78840

Dear Fangoria,

. . . To show gore, or not to show gore, *that* is the question! Or is it? I realize that you're up to your fangs in "GORE" letters, but I think that the answer to this question is more simple than you think it is. First of all, since gore is, unfortunately, part of today's horror movies, it seems natural that you would show it in your magazine. But if you feel that it is too offensive for some of your readers, then take it out. You see, the point is that your magazine does not rely on gore. With or without gore, it's the best of it's kind. And I'd be willing to bet that most of your readers feel the same way whether they realize it or not.

Mike Todd
98-27th St. NW
Barberton, Ohio 44203

Please—

. . . 1) Get, or keep the gore OUT of FANGORIA. There is nothing wrong with gore in movies. On film it only lasts a minute, in your magazine it stares at you forever.

2) Get off Siskel's back! He likes horror movies too!

Dan Humphrey
8462 Treasure Mountain Dr.
Sandy, UT 84092

Dear Sirs,

. . . Okay, I've remained silent long enough . . . I've had it! Usually I let this type of thing slide by without making a big deal out of it, but it's just gone too far. I'm speaking, of course, of the ever increasing number of angry letters sent to the Postal Zone protesting the publication of "gory" photographs. Are these namby-pamby, snot-nosed sissies ever going to shut up? Personally, I like gory photos, they don't bother me, and anyone who keeps losing his appetite because of them is reading the wrong magazine.

FANGORIA is a magazine dedicted to the cinema of horror and terror (in which, it follows, horrible and terrible things happen with great frequency) and in my estimation is the only one 'with the guts (no pun intended) to go all the way. In addition to superior reporting and timely news of the world of "film noir," FANGORIA offers rare stills from hundreds of fright flicks opening all over the globe. Gory as they may be, you seldom see them printed anyway else.

Perhaps in the future, a "Wimp Warning" could be utililzed, clearly printed on the cover of any issue that contains subject matter that might disturb some of FANGORIA's more sensitive readers.

Richard Smith, Jr.
Danielson, Connecticut

Dear Fangorians,

. . . Your Postal Zone of issue #10 was the most controversial, and best, yet. In this country, anything can be put on film, or printed on paper. The question is not whether or not this right should continue, but what effects can this have on people.

Publishing gory pictures will generally have no effect on the criminal tendencies of an adult, but it can shape the ideas of good and bad in pre-teens. If a child is raised on such magazines as FANGORIA, which publish pictures proclaiming not just murder and dismemberment, but senseless, bloody killings of graphic proportions, this will cause them to think of such as commonplace and not being morally wrong. This is fact. When a child sees photos as those described, he may start to grow an appreciation of films centering around SFX of graphic violence, thinking such acts to be of no harm.

There are many potential murderers among us, and if the seed is planted, the horror that grows is no fantasy escapism—it is harsh, deadly reality. If Hitler had been born just a score after he did, the millions of lives taken during the Second World War wouldn't have perished.

Your magazine appeals to two groups of people: Fans who read it for intelligently written articles on superb celluloid works of old and new, and then there are those who read FANGORIA to drool over stories on cheap, artless gore-flicks, and slobber at the sight of a large, color picture of a dying man's blood splattered across the page. You have a choice of which audience to devote your publication to. Members of each group will gradually fade away, for "FANGORIA has not enough of 'this', and too much of 'that'." You must decide which group to satisfy, for "you cannot serve two masters." Would you rather contribute to a magazine of intelligent moviegoers, or one of a mindless, impassionate public who relish the sight of the violent killing of a human being? Which?

Name and Address Withheld

Dear Mister Martin,

. . . I feel that I finally had my fill and I must simply write on a situation in the movies today that is absolutely appaling. Namely, the film industry's recent fascination with the over-use of gore in today's "horror" movies. Now don't get the wrong idea, I think gore and excessive violence can be very good if used artistically and creatively. George Romero's films are perfect examples of films that used gore with artistic style (and as for the gory pictures in FANGORIA I urge you continue printing them). What I am objecting to is the use of gore needlessly. *Friday the 13th* is an excellent example of this. *Friday the 13th* was not a horror movie, it was instead, as Don Coscarelli said, a "murder" movie. *Friday the 13th* did not keep the audience on the edge of their seats through suspense but instead tried to show sickening and perverse ways to kill teenagers. The shower scene from Hitchcock's *Psycho* stands out as one of the most terrifying scenes in the history of horror films. And yet not one time do you see the knife enter Janet Leigh's body.

It is a sad state that the horror movie industry has fallen into. Many young and talented directors are forced to work on these low-grade *Halloween* rip-offs, while the creative and original ideas fail to get support. With the exceptions of *The Fog* and *Motel Hell* 1980 has been a poor year in the Horror movie industry. Let's hope 1981 proves to be a better year.

Randy Fox
Route #1
Dunmore, KY 42339

The editorial on page 4 represents two years of consideration on this matter, and the policy by which our decisions are made. Is the controversy over? Don't bet on it! —*Bob M.*

The Pit and the Pen
of Alex Gordon

Alex and the gentlest of monsters—Boris Karloff!

The name of Boris Karloff means many things to many people.

This is what Boris Karloff means to me. Much has been written about him through the years, all of it complimentary. But he was much more than a gentleman and a fine actor. I had the privilege of knowing him, as did my brother, Richard Gordon, who produced two of his pictures. Ever since we first saw him on the screen as small boys, Boris Karloff brought pleasure into our lives. We saw all his pictures and collected his stills. We saw him on the stage and talked with him, and always hoped that we might eventually work with him. Finally this dream came true. His gentle humor and dedication to his work and his constant plans for the future were a joy to behold. He was unique and versatile and there was no other actor like him. He played dramatic and comedy roles equally well and even did musical comedy and children's tales. And whenever he played a monster or mad scientist he always brought sympathy to the role and there was a human motive for his predicament.

He never won an Award in Hollywood—but he won the loyalty of four generations of fans around the world. And—like the dedicated inventor he often protrayed so ably—his work lives on—in Film Museums and Archives, on television screens and in the homes of Film Collectors—and in cinemas that revive his pictures constantly through the years . . . an ever lasting tribute to a star who will always hold an honored and unique place in motion picture history.

Karloff as a surgeon in search of painless surgery in *Corridors of Blood*.

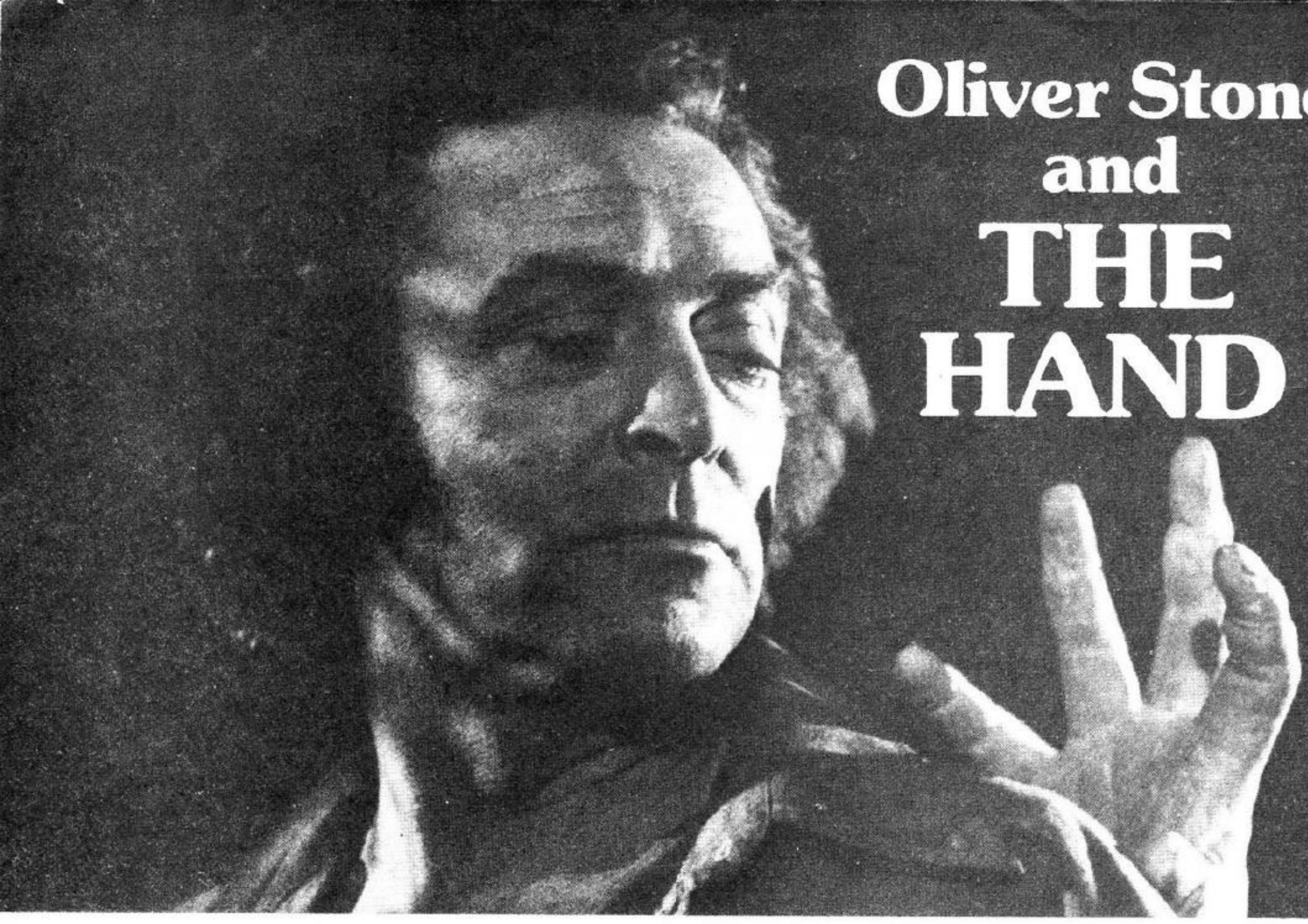
I think I summed up my feelings pretty well when I wrote the above words in 1969 for *Cinema* magazine, shortly after the passing of one of the film world's finest actors. And, judging by the continued interest of so many in Karloff, as an actor and as a human being, my pronouncement of his immortality was not at all overstated.

The first time my brother Richard and I saw Boris Karloff on the screen we never dreamed we'd get to know him personally and even produce two pictures with him. It was in *The House of Rothschild*, Fox's 1934 production starring George Arliss as the world famous banker Baron Rothschild, that Karloff's presence first impressed itself upon us. As kids in pre-World War II England, we were not permitted to attend horror films due to stringent censorship laws in that country at the time, so it had to be a non-horror picture in which we would first see the great star we had heard and read about so much. Later we would rush to see *The Invisible Ray*, *The Raven*, *The House of Doom* (English title for *The Black Cat*), the Frankenstein films and the off-beat performances by the versatile star in *Night Key* and the earlier *Scarface* and *Five Star Final*.

Our first encounter with Boris Karloff in person came in New York at the opening of his Broadway play, *The Linden Tree*. Written by famous British author/playwright J. B. Priestly, whose successes included *Dangerous Corner*, *The Good Companions* and *Benighted* (upon which the movie *The Old Dark House* was based), *The Linden Tree* proved too soft

(continued on page 63)

Oliver Stone and THE HAND



PHOTOS: © 1981 Orion Pictures

After ten year of struggle, he became an "over-night success" —and now makes his second directorial debut.

By BOB MARTIN

"There's nothing worse than to mislead a horror fan," says Oliver Stone, speaking of his new film, *The Hand*, "and I truly believe that any horror fan will be disappointed if he comes to this movie expecting a *Jaws*-like monster hand and its progressive subjugation of society. It's not about that—it's about the character played by Michael Caine; the hand of the title is only a manifestation of his will."

Stone, along with the film's distributor, Orion Pictures, prefers to describe *The Hand* as a film of psychological suspense. The spirit of the film is closer to Polanski's *Repulsion* or Fritz Lang's *M* than it is to the average scare feature, according to the 34-year-old director, in its story of Jon Lonsdale, a successful professional cartoonist who loses his drawing hand in an auto accident. With his career ended, Lonsdale's shaky marriage disintegrates—and things grow worse from there.

"It's based on a book called *The Lizard's Tail*, by Marc Brandel, a very fine Irish writer," says Stone. "In the book, the hand is only suggested, never seen. When I adapted it, I found that aspect rather dull for a film, so after some consideration I decided to put a visible hand in it, and to call it *The Hand*. But the hand itself is only a manifestation of the character's anger, a symbol. The true emphasis of the movie is Caine, as you watch him change from an ordinary man, to a very angry man, to a disturbed man, and finally a ruined man."

The multiple setbacks that drive John Lonsdale to the edge of sanity find some parallel in the life of writer-director Stone; his career in film, now spanning about ten years, has endured considerable upheaval. After years of struggle, he finally achieved some measure of success three years ago, with his Oscar-winning screenplay for *Midnight Express*, the story of a young man convicted of drug smuggling and his nightmarish experiences in a Turkish prison.

Stone's interest in movies first blossomed at the age of eight, "when my mother used to make me play hooky from school, so I could go with her to New York to see movies.

"I used to like the epics . . . *El Cid*, *The Ten Commandments*. My adult sensibility came when I was about 14, and saw *La Dolce Vita*. I was really impressed by it, as I was by *Repulsion*, a couple of years later. They made me realize that there was another element to the screen.

In 1965, Stone dropped out of Yale University after one year of study and entered the army as a teacher, stationed in Vietnam. Upon his discharge, he became a merchant marine, and completed his first novel, drawing upon his Vietnam experiences, at the age of 20.

"The novel was rejected by several publishers," he recalls, "and I was really broken up about it. I then volunteered, entering the army for a second time. Went to back to Vietnam, and served in the infantry.

"I came back at the age of 22, feeling pretty rootless and wanting to write. A friend of mine had been to NYU film school and suggested that I go. It seemed like an interesting combination—using the writing skills with something new. One of my first teachers was Martin Scorsese, who had a great influence on me. He was so excited by the medium . . .and he conveyed that enthusiasm to me."

Stone made several short films while attending the school, including *Last Year In Vietnam*, based upon his own combat experiences, which went on to play several short film festivals. His skill was recog-

Opposite: Michael Caine as Jon Lansdale, a man severely in need of a helping hand, who gets more than he bargained for. Above: Lansdale's tragic accident sets the machinery of his destruction in motion in an early scene from *The Hand*.

nized by the school when they bestowed upon him the Stanley Schneider Award for direction of a student film.

Largely on the strength of his work as a student, Stone and a friend named Jeff Kappelman were able to raise enough cash among Canadian film investors to mount their first feature film, *Seizure*, with Stone as director. His first professional film experience was not an easy one.

"We raised about 150 (thousand dollars) cash and 200 in deferments," says Stone. "I gave my blood to it, along with every last dime I could raise; I cut the film myself, with an assistant, while living in a $40-a-week hotel room. We eventually got chased out of Canada owing money, and I had to steal the answer print from the lab and run with it over the border to the U.S. in order to sell it."

But making the film was only half the nightmare for Stone. *Seizure* was acquired for American distribution by Cinerama Releasing; ten years later, Stone still feels sharply disappointed by the handling of the film, accusing C.R., its parent company AIP, and the men who run them with "almost criminal neglect of the artist."

Seizure starred Jonathan Frid as a successful novelist whose recurring nightmares are populated by the strange characters of his novels (including Herve Villechaise and Martine Beswicke, who played the Queen of Evil). In these dreams Frid must choose between his own life and that of his daughter; he chooses his own, and is tortured by guilt. The cycle continues until Frid finds the only release—through his own death.

"Vincent Canby said a few nice things about it in *The New York Times*, and some other kind things were said about it. But it was totally ignored by the distributors," says Stone.

Still a thorn in Stone's side is Astral Bellevue Pathe, the production outfit that owns *Seizure*, and keeps it in circulation as a second-biller with other low-budget shock films. "The reason this sort of thing happens," he explains, "is that these companies are owned by an element in Canada who call themselves 'tax shelter specialists.' They buy films for some ridiculously low figure, never pay, and then own them outright. Because they make their profit by deferring taxes for the year that the film was bought, they have no incentive to make any further profit on it.

"Now, when a guy contacts me about getting the film to show in England, there's not a thing I can do about it. I can't even get the Canadian assholes on the phone, or to cooperate in any way. There's *nothing* I can do—except express my rage."

After his experience with the film, Stone found himself "totally disillusioned and spiritually depleted. I took a job with a godawful sports film company and kept writing, writing, writing. I'd written 14 original screenplays before *Midnight Express* was made.

"But they couldn't defeat me. They'd stopped me as a director, but I came back as a screenwriter."

Of the 14 screenplays that he wrote in the years following *Seizure*, five concerned the Vietnamese war. He would still like to mount a major feature drawing from his combat experience (he was wounded twice and awarded the Bronze Star), but is starting to feel resigned to Hollywood's resistance to his proposals.

"They're doing the mythic stuff about the war—*Apocalypse Now* and *The Deer Hunter*—but they haven't done a reality movie. *Go Tell the Spartans* was awful, a complete lie, worse than any of John Wayne's war movies. And *A Rumor of War!* They ought to execute the guy who made that one. I spent 16 months in the jungle, and when I see crap like that on TV passed off as the truth to the American public I get *enraged*. Brad Davis went and did it—sold out. He wasn't over there, so maybe he didn't know, but that screenplay was very far from the truth.

"Probably the best screenplay I've every written is *Born On the Fourth of July*, based on the Ron Kovic book about Vietnam. I spent about a year on that, worked with Al Pacino, who was going to star in it. We

(continued on page 44)

PHOTOS: © 1981 Paramount Pictures

Jason's the sort of boy who simply worships his mother, as in this candle-lit altar scene.

Friday the 13th Part II

Jason returns to avenge his Mom, with an all-new set of camper-victims—Producer-Director Steve Miner promises more of the same (only better!).

By JAMES H. BURNS

The surprise hit of the 1980 film season was Sean Cunningham's *Friday the 13th*, a low-budget "horror" entry produced by Georgetown Productions. The terror flick shocked Paramount Pictures, who had picked it up for release to make a few quick bucks with the drive-in crowd, when I evolved into the 20th-largest grossing film of the year (topping Filmways' and Brian DePalma's so-called *major* motion picture, *Dressed to Kill*).

Friday the 13th told the plight of a group of counselors being murdered one by one at Camp Crystal Lake. The camp's "curse" and killer turned out to be Mrs. Vorhees (Betsy Palmer), the mother of a "hideously deformed boy," Jason, who had drowned in the camp's lake over twenty years earlier because of two counselor's negligence. After a suspenseful showdown, Mrs. Vorhees was decapitated by the one surviving teenager, Alice (Adrienne King).

Friday the 13th Part II picks up with Alice, safely in her own home, dreaming of the terrifying nightmare that she endured at Camp Crystal Lake. Aroused from her nap, Alice goes to the refreigerator to fetch her cat a snack, only to find Mrs. Vorhees' severed head staring wickedly back at her. From out of nowhere, a mysterious stranger thrusts an icepick through the base of Alice's nose, signalling the start of Jason's revenge . . .

Friday the 13th Part II's main plot line begins five years later as a group of young adults are making their way to a counselor training session at Lake Region, a settlement in the same area as *Part I*'s "Camp Blood." When the majority of youths leave for a night at a local music club, it isn't long before Jason's reign of terror begins.

"We set out to make the most terrifying film *ever*," says *Friday the 13th Part II*'s producer-director, Stever Miner (who also served as the original's associate producer and unit production manager). "I know that every horror director says that, but I really think we did it. I set out to *top Friday the 13th*. So far, we've had some very successful screenings."

Thoughts of a *Friday the 13th* sequel began occuring to Georgetown Productions immediately upon the film's prosperous opening week last spring. At that time, Steve Miner was in Rome working with director Wes Craven (*Last House on the Left, Stranger in the House*) on pre-production for a movie entitled *Marimba* (temporarily suspended but still in development). Plans for *Friday the 13th Part II* became definite last July when Georgetown decided to begin shooting in September, enabling Paramount to capitalize on the original's audience by releasing a sequel only one year after the first film's premiere.

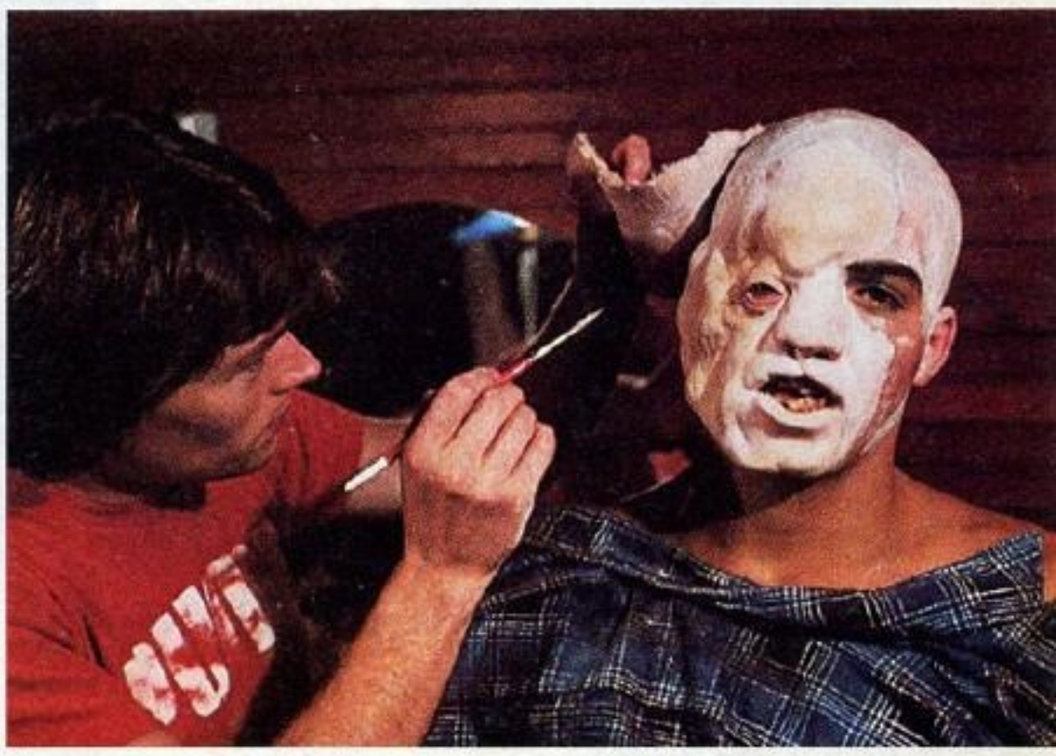
"Because Georgetown wanted to shoot the sequel so quickly, Sean (Cunningham) wasn't going to be able to do it," recalls Miner. "Sean was busy preparing a lot of projects at other studios. I was originally approached to only *produce* the sequel, but it soon became clear to me that I would do as good a job at directing *Part II* as anybody else could. I was familiar with the first film and I've been a fan of horror movies all of my life. This would be the first time that I directed a theatrical feature, but I had done second unit directing on a couple of the movies that I've produced and I'd also directed some industrial films. I think I understood what the first picture's audience *and* fans of the genre wanted in the second chapter."

Producing and directing *Friday the 13th Part II* would prove to be a difficult task. Many horror enthusiasts felt that the initial movie offered nothing more than its grotesque murders and, inherently, another opportunity to marvel at the work of makeup master Tom Savini. These fans thought that the killings weren't supported by enough true plot substance.

"*Friday the 13th* worked *well*," Miner counters. "The enjoyment with this kind of

Mark (Tom McBride) develops a "split" personality during the counselors' night of terror.

Jeff and Sandy find their romantic interlude interrupted by the arrival of a vengeful orphan.



Carl Fullerton builds Warrington Gillette's face into Jason's new image.

film is audience participation. The audience didn't even mind the dumb stuff, because they could *talk back* to it. They really stayed with the story. What *does* happen with a lot of these movies is that they have terrific ad campaigns but then don't deliver. I don't think that that was the case with *Friday the 13th*, because business continued strong for weeks and weeks. Practically all of the advertising money was spend during its first week of release, which means that its continued success was based on good word of mouth. Everybody that I've talked to really can't wait to see the sequel.

"In my film, Jason looks much different," Miner states, "but that could be because he's five years older now. Yet he's not the living dead, as some rumors have speculated. *I* think that Jason survived his drowning. That's how I approached it, but that doesn't mean that Alice saw the *real* Jason. In *Part II*, Jason doesn't talk like Mrs. Vorhees was imitating him. In fact, in this movie, Jason can't or at least doesn't, talk."

Confronting the question of whether or not Jason survived was one of Miner's lesser worries. He also had to overcome some of the original picture's more principal problems.

"Saying there were mistakes in the first-film's script was not the way I approached it," says the director-producer. "I came to the project thinking that there were some very *good* things about the first script, mainly the structure. I felt that the overall framework—the way the story was told—worked. We tried, however to improve upon some of the character and dialogue flaws. We attempted to make the characters a little more realistic. We *did* avoid 'strip monopoly . . .'"

Miner and screenwriter Ron Kurz (who had done some rewrites on *Part I*'s script), did indeed give their movie fuller characters. Yet their reminiscent structure—including a throat slashing and an after-sex murder—might disturb some theater patrons who pay to see a *new* production. These scenes' saving grace is that, for the most part, they are put against different settings and emotional moods from what was utilized in Cunningham's feature. Other holdovers from *Part I* are Harry Manfredini's "Hiss, hiss, hissing" Jason soundtrack theme, a swimming hole sequence, and Walt Gorney as the camptown's resident weirdo, Crazy Ralph.

"Walt is really a very dedicated actor," Miner smiles. "I think that he tends to live his roles. We'd be between takes, sitting around the location, and Walt would be talking to himself. I don't know if he does that in real life, but he did it on the set. Crazy Ralph is *so* strange, that maybe Walt had to act weird *all of the time* in order to stay in character."

While retaining Walt Gorney and Adrienne King was fairly easy, getting *Friday the 13th*'s production personnel to return was nearly impossibly. Most followups have sometimes as much as two

Jeff (Bill Randolph) suffers from a severe hang-up.

Gee . . . Jason coulda had a V-8!

years after their predecessor's release before they start shooting, but since *Friday the 13th Part II* was slated to begin so quickly, most of the original's crew were committed to other projects. Perhaps Miner's largest loss was the absence of Tom Savini.

"Tom's a good friend and a very talented man," says Miner. "Unfortunately, he was involved with another film in Buffalo (*The Burning*). When his schedule kept running over and it became apparent that he wouldn't be able to do the sequel, I called a good friend of mine in Los Angeles, Stan Winston [*Gargoyles*' "background" creatures, *Dead and Buried*].

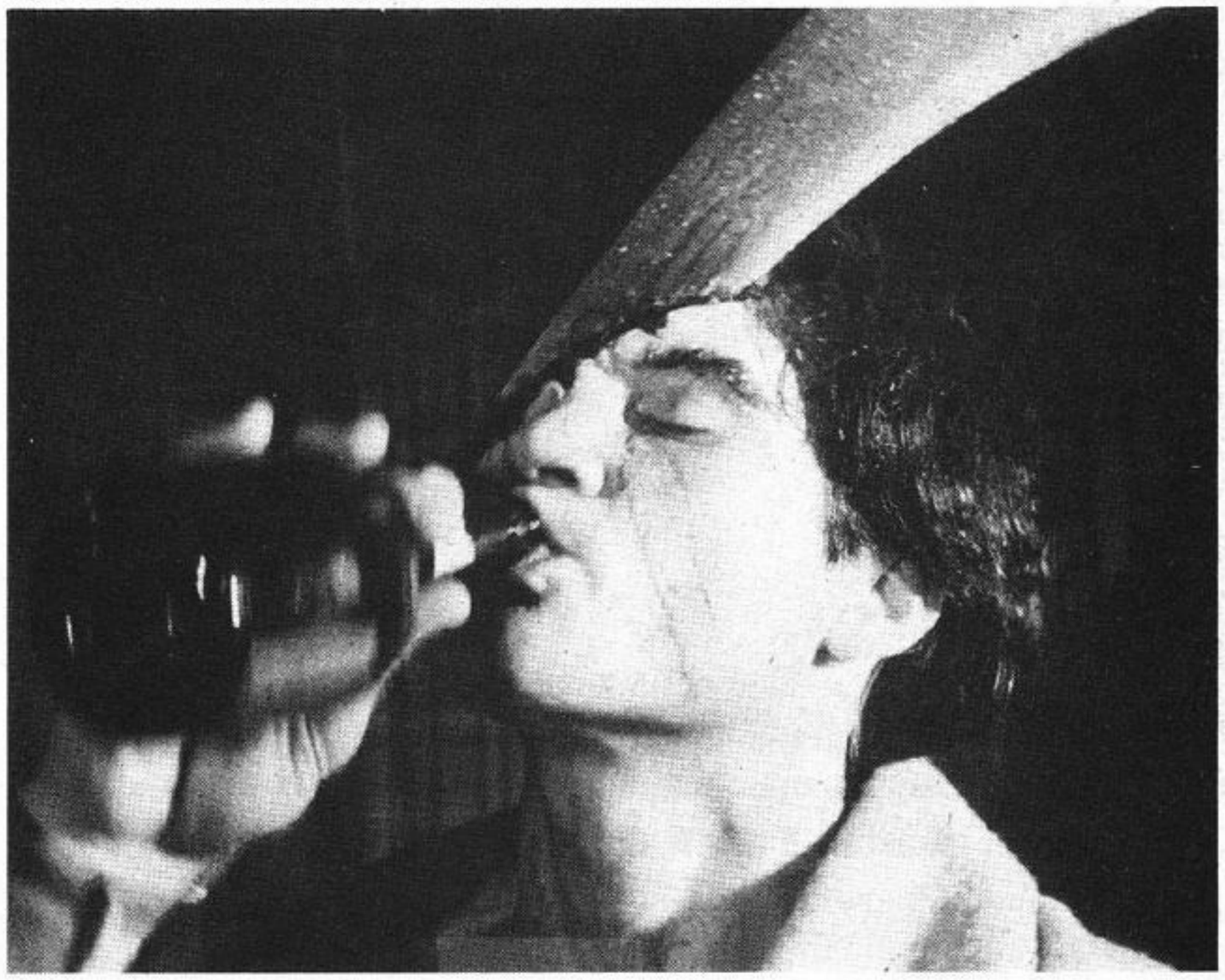
"When I called Stan about *Friday the 13th Part II*, he said that he wanted to do it, but that he also had a bunch of conflicts. One of the problems was that I had to shoot here in the East Coast and Stan was busy with his studio in California. [Winston wound up casting Betsy Palmer's negative mold for Mrs. Vorhees' severed head.] Stan told me to call Dick Smith, who then highly recommended Carl Fullerton. [Fullerton had worked in various capacities on such endeavors as *Saturday Night Live*, *The Wiz*, the upcoming *Wolfen*, and as Smith's assistant on *Altered States*.] Stan also thought extremely well of Carl. It *was* a disappointment not to use Tom Savini again, because he has such tremendous creative energy and is a joy to work with. Now, he even has certain box office appeal. But when Carl Fullerton brought a severed head that he had made for *Wolfen*—it was so amazingly lifelike and extraordinary—to our first production meeting, I knew that he'd be up to the job. I confidently feel that after *Wolfen* and *Friday the 13th Part II*, the name Carl Fullerton will have box office appeal as well. He's incredibly skilled and creative."

No matter how important script, cast and crew may be the real star of any graphic horror film is its special effects. Fortunately, Miner's gamble on the relatively unknown Carl Fullerton paid off. Fullerton's work in the sequel is certainly as disturbing as anything created by Savini for *Part I*.

"The most elaborate makeup effect is the 'after-sex' impaling through two bodies at the same time," comments Miner. "We used special rigs and some excellent large body appliances that Carl Fullerton made which necessitated the actors being put in *very* uncomfortable positions. Carl and his assistant, Dick Smith's son, David, have a kind of air pressure tank that shoots blood out. They made the scene really gruesome. The blood is made up of jelly and stuff . . . It's horrible!

"My *favorite* murder is when Mark (Tom McBride) gets the machete in his head. Part of the thrill in these movies is that the audience knows that the guy or gal is going to get it, but the tension builds up as they're trying to guess *when* and from *where* the murder's going to come. What I like to do is distract the audience as much as possible. The buildup to the machete killing is nice because it really throws the audience off. I think it's cleverly conceived and executed. To do the murder, I had a special mask built to cover Tom McBride's face and catch the machete. With a quick reverse cut, though, it seems like the murder actually happens on screen. The mask was very simply built from a catcher's mask that we put styrofoam on. We made the machete out of balsa wood."

Do *not* tell this man that he looks like John Hurt.



A nice cold beer—just the thing for those splitting headaches.

Unlike many first-time directors faced with helming a horror opus, the prospect of dealing with intense gore effects didn't bother Miner.

"I really found it interesting," Miner admits. "On the last film, Tom Savini took over the editing studio in my house in Connecticut to build all of his stuff. I was with him all of the time, so I got a pretty good working knowledge of how all the various tricks work. With my background as an editor, I was able to easily visualize the effects sequences. In fact, I storyboarded the whole film. I very carefully worked out how the effects scenes would work, how one shot would cover another. That enabled me to tell Carl to build only

(continued on page 64)

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Animated Kudos

Fangoids,

. . . Of everything in FANGORIA #10 that I could write about, I want to thank you for your tribute to Tex Avery and interview with the animators of *Faeries*. Next to Warner Brothers cartoons, the best animated cartoons ever done were those of Tex Avery.

The animators of *Faeries* also know what they are talking about, especially in the case of what passes for animation these days. For those of us who've grown up with the classic Disney, Warner and Avery cartoons, and even those of us who've discovered them on TV, today's cartoons are just pitiful. Let's hope for some new, high quality animation.

Mitchell B. Craig
102 E. Confederate Ave.
Lancaster, SC 29720

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Dear Kerry:

. . . I am sympathetic with your friend Martin (Imagination Inc. FANGORIA #9). The *name* FANGORIA scares me!

Juanita Smith
Columbia, S.C.

Kerry!

. . . How could you?! Poor Martin shall be condemned to read, re-read, show-off, and happily fondle only early drafts of that wonderful editorial in FANGORIA #9 because he's too frightened to go near the magazine!

Bill Smith
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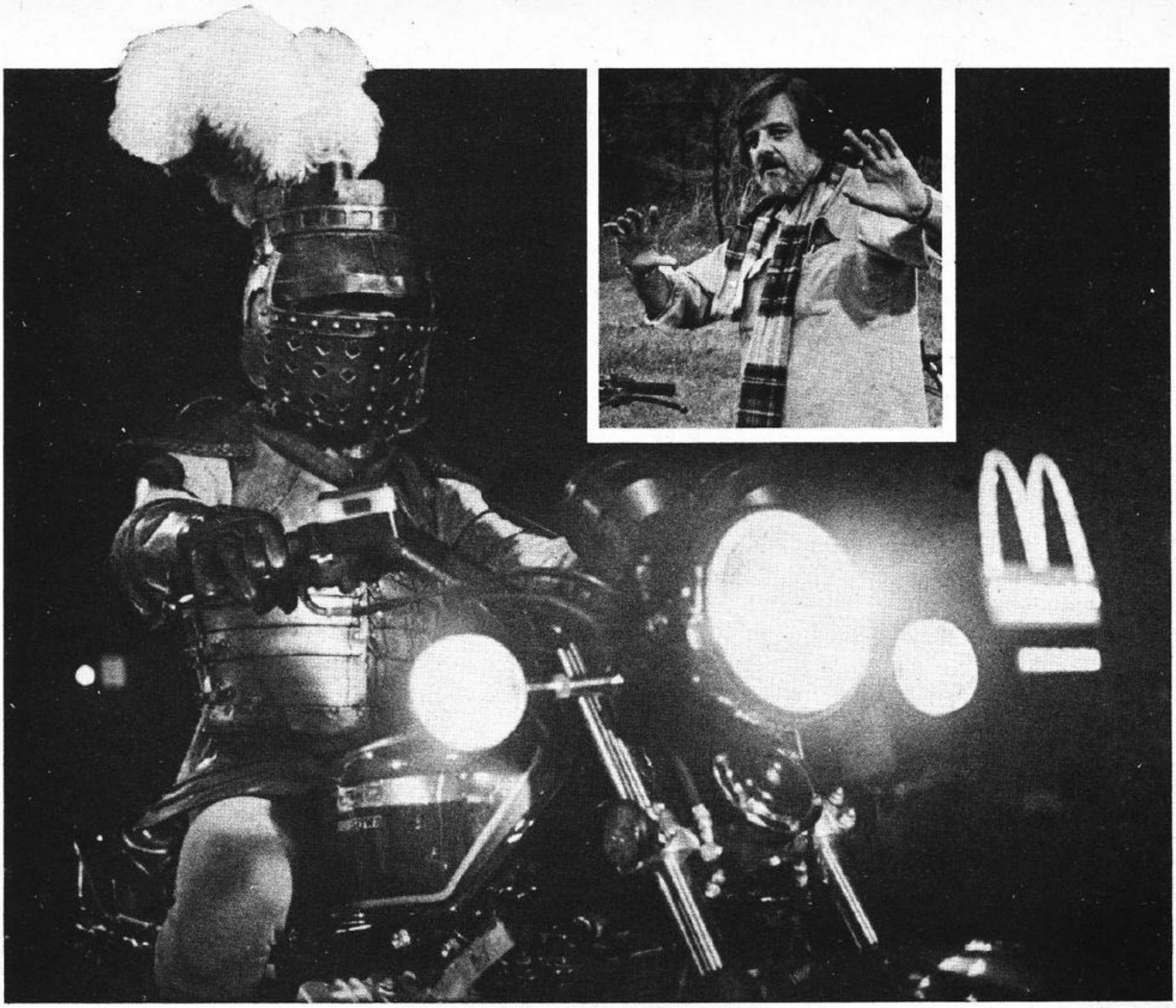


PHOTOS: © 1981 United Film Distribution

Knightriders

Romero's newest film—no zombies, no ghouls—but plenty of heart and soul!

By BOB MARTIN

Fight or Yield!

That's the motto held by the travelling troupe of jousting motorcyclists featured in George Romero's new film, *Knightriders*. But it could also serve as the motto of a very small handful of filmmakers who regularly fight for the opportunity to make popular movies without sacrificing their personal integrity.

George Romero is certainly one of these. In the 13 years since his first feature was released, he has directed three films that went on to become international classics of the horror genre—*Night of the Living Dead, Martin* and *Dawn of the Dead*. During the same years, he made three films that failed to reach the same measure of success—*It's Always Vanilla, Jack's Wife* and *The Crazies*. A lot has been written about why these films failed. Some might suspect, though it's seldom seen in print, that it's the "gore" factor that marks the major difference between the successful Romero films and the failures. Certainly this has *something* to do with it; the box office success of films like *Friday the 13th, Maniac*, and *Zombie* is adequate proof that copious bloodletting alone is a major draw at your local neighborhood theater. But these Romero films were more severely handicapped by the conditions under which they were made. Underfinanced and badly distributed, the Romero "failures" never had a chance to compete with the overblown, superpublicized products of Hollywood. With the odds that were stacked against him, it's a small miracle that Romero was able to continue to exist as an independent filmmaker in the long, lean years between *Night of the Living Dead* and *Martin*. This small miracle has a name—Richard P. Rubinstein.

In 1973, Richard Rubinstein was working on Wall Street, a young apprentice broker with a master's degree in business administration from Columbia. But the sterile world of Wall Street was not the limit to Rubinstein's horizons; an interest in film and in broadcast journalism had led him to a second career as a columnist for *Filmmaker's Newsletter*. When, in the same year, Romero and Rubinstein were brought together for an interview for the publication, their mutual interests and diverse backgrounds led to the establishment of Laurel Entertainment, Inc. The first few years of the partnership produced a series of sports films that were seen in the western states following ABC-TV's *Monday Night Football*. From this beginning, Rubinstein expanded Laurel into book publishing, records, the importation of foreign films and finally feature film production with 1977's *Martin*. With the manner of a hard-nosed lawyer, and with a negotiation skill that came from absolute confidence in

Gary Lahti, Romero's "Lancelot" figure in *Knightriders*.

Romero, R.C. Hassanein of U.F.D., cinematographer Michael Gornick and producer Richard Rubinstein on the *Knightriders* set.

the worthiness of his partner's talents, Rubinstein saw to it that Romero was provided the economic freedom to make films in his own way. "George likes to say, 'the rollercoaster ride comes first,'" says Rubinstein. "I add that at the end of the rollercoaster ride are profits."

Knightriders like, *Jack's Wife* and *Vanilla* before it, is totally outside the field of horror, but, unlike those films, it was solidly financed and guaranteed wide distribution before the first-draft script was written. Should it prove to be commercially successful, the victory will be especially sweet to Romero. While all of his previous movies have, to a large extent, depended upon their characters and relationships, in *Knightriders* the characters are not competing wih the grue and gore that to some, is synonymous with Romero—it is a film that belongs to its actors, more than to its effects men.

The film tells the story of a travelling commune with a society based on the medieval tradtions of chivalry and dedication to one's lord. The community income results from a "renaissance fair" that the troupe sets up in each of the small towns that they visit in their travels across the country. At these fairs, craftspeople, artisans and musicians ply their trades; but the main attraction to the crowds that attend them is the jousts, with skilled cyclists dressed in home-made armor, having at each other with lances, maces and broadswords. These riders are the Knights of the group, which is ruled by a King, Sir William (Ed Harris), and his Queen, Lady Linet (Amy Ingersoll).

But times are hard for the troupe, which has taken on more members than they can economically support. One of the riders, Morgan, the Black Knight (Tom Savini), realizes that all of the group's problems might be solved by a simple change in attitude. Magazine and television reporters have shown a great deal of interest in the Knightriders and their new form of "daredevil" jousting. A fast-talking show business promoter is anxious to put a Knightriders show on the road, complete with the sort of promotion and publicity that will guarantee big box office.

Sir William (Ed Harris), the leader of the troupe, and Lady Linet (Amy Ingersoll) astride Sir William's "mount."

Morgan feels that such things are necessary just for the sake of survival; but Sir William, who rules the group, is dedicated to doing the right thing, judged by his own very harsh standards. This conflict is the motive power that carries *Knightriders* briskly to its climactic scenes.

In a brief conversation with FANGORIA*, Romero shed a bit more light on the nature of *Knightriders'* principal characters.

"From the very beginning of the film," says Romero, "Billy, the King, is at a point where he's becoming fanatically devoted to the ideals that the troupe represents. No one else is on that plane other than Merlin (Brother Blue). The relationship between Merlin and Billy is a very mystical and philosophical ... *love*, almost. The Queen can't get on that plane. *No one* else in the troupe is really there. The most antagonistic and rebellious of the group is Morgan. Morgan also has the most potential for understanding Billy's feelings, but Morgan is essentially a realist, he has a line: 'I never was into this King Arthur crap, I'm just into the bikes.' But he eventually comes around, as his own experiences bring him around to it.

"As we join the troupe at the beginning, the members are just getting to the point where they're starting to feel the real effect that this code of ethics, morality and comraderie has upon them. At the same time, it's getting harder and harder for them to

(continued on page 66)

*Yes, brief—Romero was still in the midst of editing *Knightriders* when we spoke to him, and we were not about to detain him from such work. However, we did extract an agreement to a major interview at his next opportunity!

Left: Savini, as Morgan the Black Knight, prepares for the jousts. Right: Despite their radically different views, the relationship between William and Morgan is a warm one. At left is Angie, Morgan's lady, played by Chris Forrest, Mrs. George Romero. Below: Two knights engaged in the jousts.

McKimson, That Is!

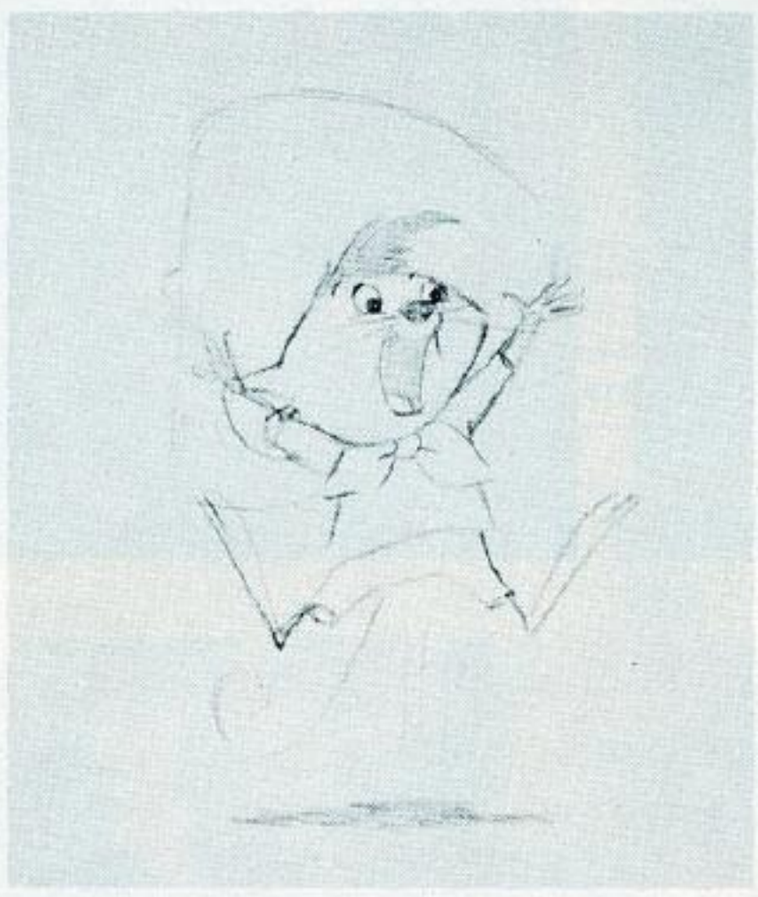
He gave us the definitive Bugs plus Foghorn Leghorn, Speedy Gonzales and lots of laughs!

By STEVE SCHNEIDER

In light of the celebrity and adulation recently lavished upon many of the veterans of Hollywood's Golden Age of animation, the late Robert McKimson has been genuinely shortchanged. His significance is undeniable: as the director of over 135 theatrical shorts for the old Warner Bros. cartoon studio, McKimson led some of the company's squad of star players—Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, Porky Pig, et al—through some of their most memorable moments. Yet now, almost four years after his death at age 66 on September 27, 1977, this tribute represents the first printed glimpse into the varied McKimson cartoon output.

Before being promoted to the director's chair in 1945, Robert McKimson had already made lasting contributions to the Warner studio as an animator and graphic stylist. His first experience in animation came at the still-struggling Disney studio of the late 20's; in 1930, McKimson linked up with the newly formed Leon Schlesinger Productions, whose cartoons were released through Warner Bros., where his initial assignment was to assist in the drawing of the third Merrie Melody every made. McKimson's first screen credits were received on early 30's cartoons featuring such forgettable characters as Bosco, Buddy, and Foxy, as well as the numerous one-shot films that the studio regularly manufactured.

From the first, McKimson's gifts were recognized as true studio assets. His background in fine arts was far more extensive than most of his fellow animators'; in an interview with Mark Nardone, published in Gerald and Danny Peary's *The American Animated Cartoon* (Dutton, 1980), McKimson recollected : "I had been drawing ever since I could hold a pencil and I had been painting even before I'd had any training. Then I studied anatomy for ten years just as a doctor studies it. I got so that I could spend three hours on an index finger." Subsequent coaching came from the man that Walt Disney later employed to fashion his stable of callow cartoonists into seasoned artists: "I went to Don Graham during the 1930's, before he went to teach at Disney, and studied with him for one semester just to see what he had to offer. Actually he was so enamored of my training that he spent all his time with me. He was saying, if only the other people could have such a basis . . ."

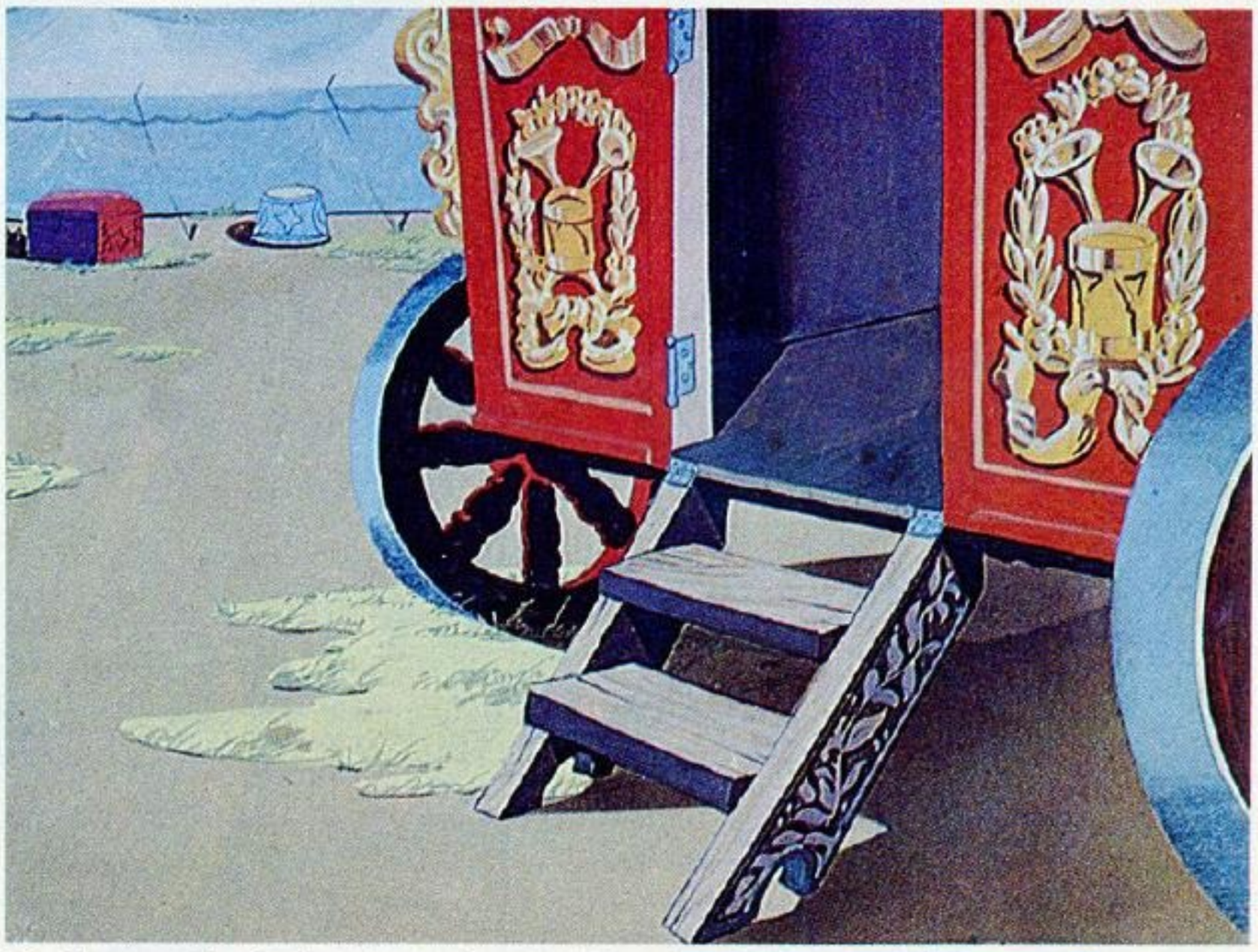


Animation drawing of Speedy Gonzales.

At Schlesinger's this "basis" was quickly put to productive use. Recognized as having an unusual capacity to visualize a character from different angles and perspectives, McKimson became one of the studio's principal model-sheet makers; he was also called upon to rework some of the story department's hasty sketches into highly polished and evocative drawings. In addition, his line control and sense of movement was so refined that he became the premier character animator on the premises; his services were sought by all of the studio's major directors.

By the time he was assigned to work in Tex Avery's revolutionary "Termite Terrace" unit in the late 30's, McKimson's animation had achieved a weightiness and fluency rarely seen outside of the Disney studio. In cartoons such as Avery's *Of Fox and Hounds* (1940) and *The Heckling Hare* (1941), McKimson's ability to endow his characters with a real sense of physical presence is instantly recognizable on the screen: solid yet supple, the pencil creations pulsate with the breath of life.

But the culmination of McKimson's work as an animator must lie in his contributions to films directed by Bob Clampett during the first half of the 1940's. And for good reason: by 1940, the collective talents of the Warner crew had hatched the enormously popular Bugs Bunny, but throughout his infancy, the rabbit lacked a strong visual identity. In his early appearances, Bugs was no more than a workable caricature of a rabbit: his construction was based on a simple scheme of circles, ovals,



Background painting from the 1946 *Acrobatty Bunny* with Bugs as the star.

ART: © 1981 Warner Bros. from the collection of Steve Schneider

This is the initial establishing shot from the 1948 Bugs cartoon, *Hot Cross Bunny*.

and connecting masses. After these first few years of defining and refining, McKimson was recruited to compose a model-sheet of the new studio star, and in 1943 produced the drawings that formally crystallized the rabbit's physical self. This model-sheet served as the reference piece and drawing guide for the entire studio in the following years, and is still accepted as the definitive representation of the wise-acre hare. As McKimson recalled in a 1976 interview with the author: "If one person must be given credit for creating Bugs Bunny, it's Tex Avery. But I made him look the way he did." Around that time, McKimson also drew the portrait of Bugs leaning against a tree with carrot poised for chomping, known as the "Easter Greeting," which has been his stock publicity pose ever since.

Consequently, McKimson's Bugs Bunny scenes of that era comprise some of the rabbit's classic performances. As handled in Clampett's *Falling Hare* (1943), *What's Cookin' Doc?* (1944) and *Hare Ribbin'* (1944), the character is realized with virtuoso flair; McKimson's animation captures what has come to be acknowledged as the essence of Bunnyhood. For *Mindrot* magazine (#13) Bob Clampett recounted: "I would always earmark the most difficult, under-played acting scenes of Bugs Bunny for (McKimson). And when I gave him his scenes, I never felt it necessary to make as many layout sketches and action roughs as I made for the other animators." Other notable McKimson efforts in Clampett films include much of the animation of the flea-riddled dog in 1943's *An Itch In Time*, and many of the street scenes in *The Hep Cat* (1942).

In view of his stature as an artist and animator, McKimson became the obvious choice for upward mobility when Warner director Frank Tashlin left the fold in 1945. Apparently, McKimson also felt the time was right for the move. He had resisted similar offers in the past due to a sense of his own inexperience: "The reason I turned down the director job for seven years was that I felt that, to be a director, you had to know every phase." But by 1945, there was no longer reason to hold back.

Bugs in drag for Clampett's Hare Ribbin', 1944.

From the outset, McKimson's direction upheld the War-Time Warner tradition of bravado and no-holds-barred irrevence. In particular, his work seized much of the demonic spirit of Bob Clampett's final films, and kept that conception alive after Clampett's departure in 1946. This can readily be seen in McKimson's initial offering as a director, 1946's *Daffy Doodles*, in which the Duck ushers in the age of graffiti by painting moustaches on all of Manhattan's available surfaces. The characters cavort with a verve and elasticity that delightfully reflects the tutelage of his former boss.

During these early years, McKimson directed a string of Bugs Bunnys that were as strong as any the studio was to produce. These include such knockabout outings as: *Acrobatty Bunny* (1946), in which Bugs bests a lion on the day the circus comes to town; *Gorilla My Dreams* (1948), where the rabbit dons bonnet and diaper to placate an overly-maternal ape; *Hot Cross Bunny* (1948), the story of a scientist intent on transposing Bugs' brain with a chicken's; *Rebel Rabbit* (1949), in which the irate hare expresses his political out-

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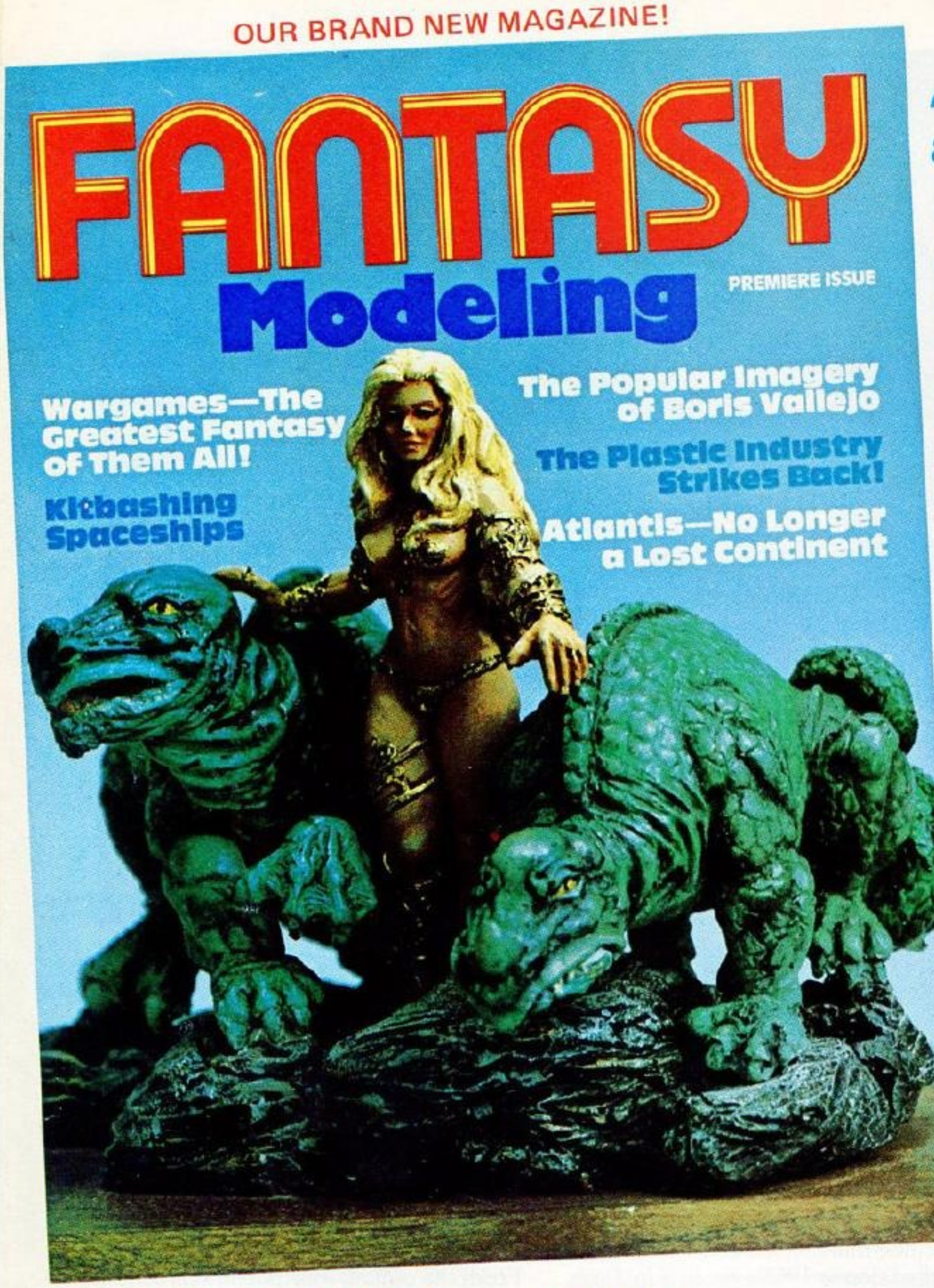

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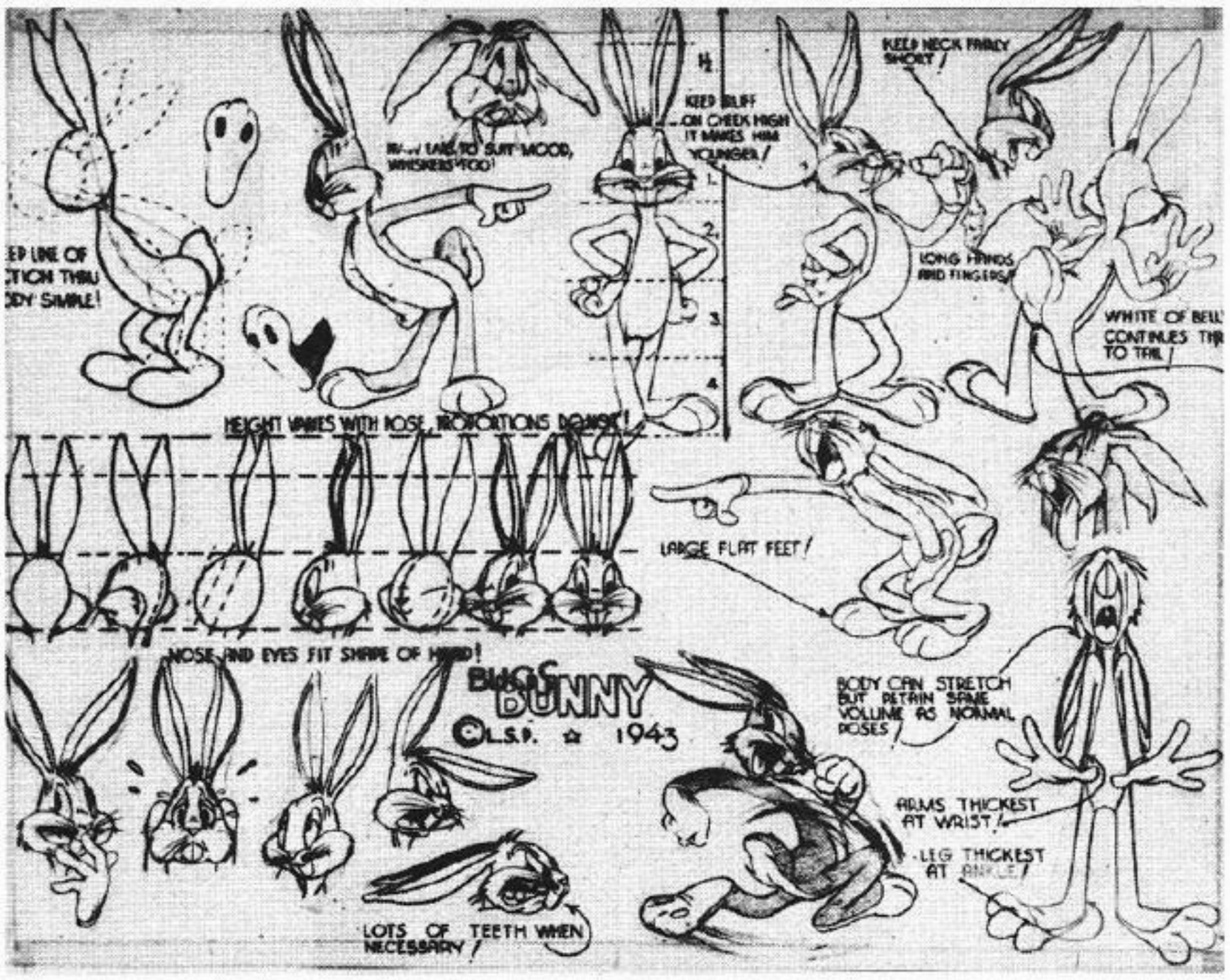


This model sheet of Bugs Bunny was for Clampett's unit in 1943.

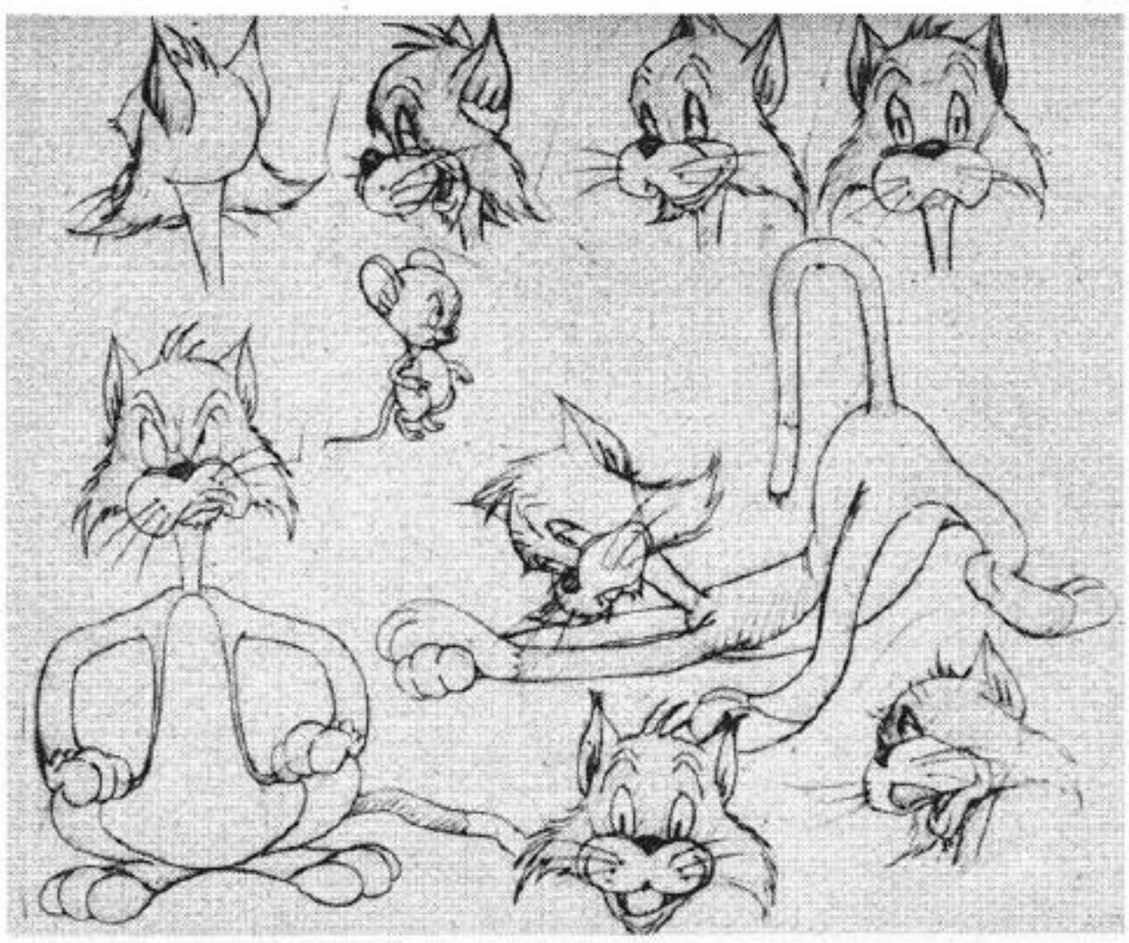
rage by shutting off Niagra Falls and sawing Florida from the mainland; and *Hurdy-Gurdy Hare* (1950), the urban saga of an organ-grinder rabbit and his cleptomaniac monkey.

Quite a few personal touches become apparent within McKimson's first few years at the helm: his characters zestfully bounder about the screen, their arms wildly flailing in emphasis of almost every syllable of dialogue. There is plentiful motion, to be sure, but often there is even more plentiful chatter; where Clampett's characters would jab a pert quip at the audience, occasionally McKimson's deliver drawn-out orations. He had an affection for extremely high and low camera angles, and would often compose shots from down between a character's legs, or up near a ceiling or balcony. Yet what stands out about these films today is the sassy, rambunctious feel they maintain: they are period pieces from an era and attitude in animation that can never be recaptured.

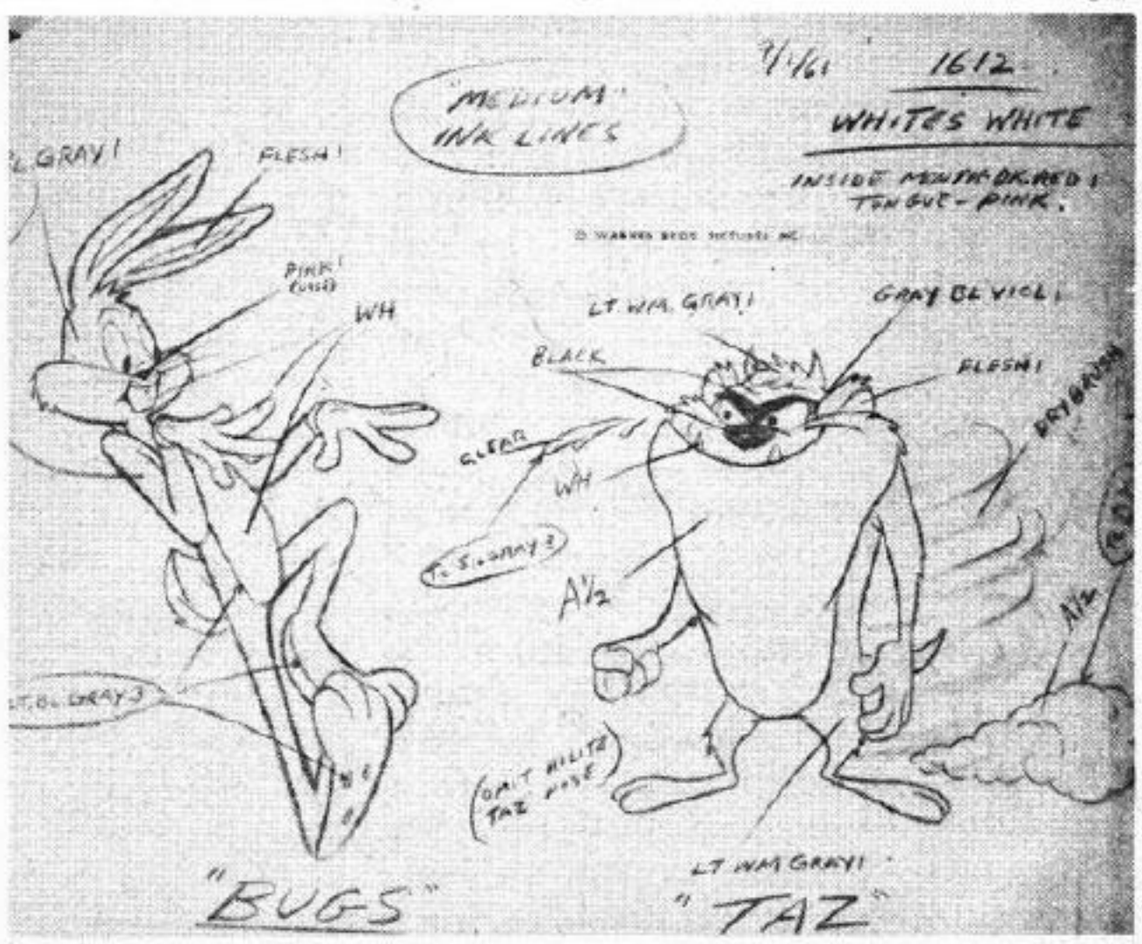
While in the process of churning out the dozens of cartoons that featured characters inherited from the past, McKimson also introduced a number of new stars to the Warner roster. 1946's *Walky Talky Hawky* started out as a vehicle for the already-established Henry Hawk, but before the film's seven minutes were up his thunder had been summarily stolen by a boisterous rooster named Foghorn Leghorn. Within a year, the rooster had gone on to lead his own series of barnyard fables. The playful baby kangroo Hippety Hopper first bowed in McKimson's *Hop, Look, and Listen* (1948), and soon became the main event in a long run of films with Sylvester and Sylvester, Jr., in which he was mistakenly believed to be a gargantuan mouse. Mexico's burn-rubber rodent, Speedy Gonzales, debuted in McKimson's 1953 farce *Cat-Tails For Two*, although most of his later appearances were under the leadership of Warner's Friz Freleng. And the omnivorous Tasmanian Devil first munched his way through a boulder in 1954's *Devil May Hare*; after becoming a favorite of cheftain Jack L. Warner, he was rescued from retirement for a short spree of cartoons alongside Bugs Bunny.

Perhaps McKimson's finest moment is to be found in his direction of the 1950 epic, *What's Up, Doc?*. The film is a cartoon documentary of Bugs Bunny's life story: after a humble beginning on the New York stage ("Oh, we're the boys of the chorus . . . "), Bugs experiences a reversal of fortune and is reduced to park bench habitation; there, however, he is spotted by impresario Elmer Fudd, and under his guidance rises to the pinnacle of his profession. A genuine classic, the film also enjoys the distinction of being excerpted in the Peter Bogdanovich feature of the same name.

By the early 50's, the Warner staff had settled down and McKimson was directing in parallel with Chuck Jones and Friz Freleng; these three were responsible for nearly all of the cartoons produced until the studio's demise in 1964. During these years, radical changes swept through the shop's approach to cartoon-making, and the period's budget cuts and stylistic alterations certainly hit McKimson's methods hardest. There is no denying that McKimson's work had suffered a steep decline in quality by 1955. Not having the money to let his characters whip across the screen, McKimson often left them immobilized; when this was combined with his prior tendency to verbosity, McKimson's films frequently became glacier-paced gab fests. The cartoons became increasingly formulaic and predictable, and seemed to cater more and more to a younger audience. Occasionally there were pleasant surprises, but by and large the spark was gone. By the time McKimson directed the last theatrical Bugs Bunny short, entitled aptly enough, *False Hare* (1964), the once comely rabbit was certainly ready to be put out to pasture.



This model sheet is for Avery's *The Haunted Mouse*, 1941.



Bugs and the Tasmanian Devil in the early 60s.

HAMMER—1981

or, Hammer Has Risen From The Grave!

By KEITH DUDLEY

PHOTOS: © 1981 ITC Entertainment

A new home for horror: Hampden House.

When the Rank/Hammer production *The Lady Vanishes* met with financial disaster, and when Hammer's board chairman, Michael Carreras, left the firm early in 1979, it seemed that Hammer would cease to exist as a major film production company. For a time, fantasy fans the world over reluctantly accepted the idea that Hammer would exist only as a memory, and as a major chapter in the history of cinematic terror.

Thankfully, subsequent events have shown that reports of Hammer's death have been premature. The 1970s certainly brought a number of setbacks to Hammer—as they did to the entire British film industry—but recently two enterprising former employees of the studio have come a long way in their efforts to put Hammer back on its feet. These two gentlemen are Hammer's company director Brian Lawrence, and former producer Roy Skeggs.

Brian Lawrence had been with Hammer almost from the very beginning in the capacity of chief buyer. He joined Michael Carreras and Anthony Hinds on the Company's board at the time that Sir James Carreras left the company. Not a lot is known about Lawrence—he tends to shun publicity and rarely gives interviews. Roy Skeggs joined the company in 1963 as an accountant. He subsequently became a production supervisor, working on *Taste the Blood of Dracula, The Vampire Lovers, Horror of Frankenstein, Countess Dracula* and countless others before becoming Hammer's producer, responsible for *Frankenstein and the Monster from Hell, The Satanic Rites of Dracula* and *To the Devil a Daughter.*

In 1976 Lawrence and Skeggs formed their own production company, Cinema Arts International, to make two films for Lord Lew Grade's Black Lion film company. The first of these was *George and Mildred*, a feature film "spin-off" from the highly successful British TV comedy series. The second picture, *Rising Damp*, was another British TV comedy spin-off, starring Leonard Rossiter, best known to American audiences as Reggie in *The Fall and Rise of Reginald Perrin.*

With the sudden new interest being shown in horror films in the past year Skeggs and Lawrence approached Lord Grade with the idea of re-forming the Hammer company. Grade was keen on the idea, and suggested a television series project, and so *House of Hammer* was born. It was decided to make a 13-part series of one-hour episodes; scripts were submitted; a top-rate film crew was assembled. All that was needed was a place to shoot the series. They decided against the confines of a major film studio, and instead decided to return to Hammer's beginnings with an old country mansion, something like Bray and Oakly Court. They found what they needed in Hampden House, a gothic house set in its own grounds, surrounded by hills and parkland.

Hampden House was built around the time of Queen Elizabeth the First, and was once the home of the Dukes of Hampden. The house has been rebuilt and added to several times over the years, and it now represents a combination of medieval, Elizabethan and Victorian architectural styles. In recent years it has been used as a health and diet clinic and as a private school for girls, but now, instead of the low rumble of dieters' hungry stomachs, or the patter of young ladies' dainty feet, the halls and corridors of Hampden House now echo with the sounds of generators and the cry of "Lights, cameras, *action*!" Plus, of course, the odd scream or two from the leading lady of the day.

The house boasts its own battlements, high towers, dark foreboding cellars, stables and courtyards. There is a swimming pool, a gymnasium and a science laboratory as well. The main hall is surrounded by a minstrel's gallery and leads to a massive library. The grounds even has its own church and graveyard. All of these, and every room in the house, will be used for filming—even Roy Skeggs gets evicted from his office from time to time so that it can be used. No space goes to waste.

Hammer moved into the new studios shortly after Easter, 1980—a good time for a resurrection—and the first episode of the TV series went before the cameras on June 9. Each of the episodes was completed within a two-week schedule, working within a strict $300,000 budget limitation. Early in the production, the series title was changed, from *House of Hammer* to *Hammer House of Horror.*

HAMMER— THE TV SERIES

"Hammer is still in the business of making the heart stop and the blood freeze, but through up to date stories that capture the audience's imagination. The *Hammer House of Horror* series for Associated Television marks something of a departure for this reknowned company, justly famous over the years for classic horror. The success of *Carrie, ALIEN, The Exorcist* and *The Omen* all pointed the way to a new audience for the horror genre. Modern subject matters that touch our lives and make what might happen to us now more exciting, more terrifying than anything that happened in the past."

So stated the publicity sheet put out by Cinema Arts/Hammer Films. But the question was, could Hammer deliver the goods without resorting to the style of the new so-called "splatter" movies that seem to be flooding the market at this time? Could they re-create the magic of bygone days? Well . . . they could and *they did!* That became clear with the very first episode of the series, broadcast in England on Saturday, September 13, 1980.

Blood bursts from a water-pipe in *The House That Bled to Death*.

WITCHING TIME is directed by Don Leaver and written by Anthony Read, and stars Jon Finch, Prunella Gee and Patricia Quinn of *Rocky Horror* fame. It tells the sex-ridden story of Lucinda, played with great gusto by Quinn, a 17th-century witch who is just about to be burned at the stake when, by some freak of nature, or perhaps by witchcraft, she is transported to 20th century England, where she turns up at the farmhouse of David and Mary (Finch and Gee). What follows is a classic of TV horror with Lucinda using all of her supernatural powers and her natural seductive powers, to battle with Mary for the possession of David's body and soul.

THE THIRTEENTH REUNION marks the return to Hammer of *Countess Dracula* director Peter Sasdy and *Horror of Frankenstein* scriptwriter Jeremy Burnham, and stars Julia Foster, Dinah Sheridan and Warren Clarke (who played Dim in Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange*). Foster plays Ruth Cairns, a newspaper reporter sent by her editor to investigate a rather dubious slimming clinic. After her arrival, she discovers, much to her horror, that she has tumbled onto something that's a bit more than she can handle—a nest of cannibals. This episode could have turned rather nasty if handled in the wrong way, but Sasdy succeeds in bringing a sense of taste and even comedy to the proceedings.

The witch Lucinda puts Mary in a tight spot in *Witching Time*.

RUDE AWAKENING is also directed by Sasdy, and written by Gerald Savoury (whose *Jekyll and Hyde* with David Hemmings was recently broadcast on the U.S. Public Broadcasting System). Denholm Elliott stars as Norman Shenley, an estate agent whose whole life seems to be one long nightmare. Much more could be said about this weird little tale, but that would be giving away too much of the story. *Rude Awakening* has to be seen to be appreciated.

GROWING PAINS is a return to the supernatural, written by Nicholas Palmer, directed by Francis Megahy and starring Gary Bond and Barbara Kellerman. Bond and Kellerman are a career conscious husband and wife whose son dies because of their neglect. As is only fair, the son duly returns from the grave to wreak havoc and revenge upon the unfeeling couple.

THE HOUSE THAT BLED TO DEATH is directed by Tom Clegg and scripted by David Lloyd. Nicholas Ball and Rachel Davies star as a couple who, along with their daughter, move into a normal-seeming house where, ten years before, a grisly murder has taken place. When the family's pet cat is found sliced in half by a broken window pane you know that you are in for a gruesome hour. Two large Ghurka knives that appear to have a life of their own, a severed hand in the refrigerator, and blood that flows from the water-pipes are among the major elements in a one-hour film that ranks alongside Seth Holt's *Taste of Fear* as one of the best psychological shockers that Hammer has made.

CHARLIE BOY is directed by Robert Young of *Vampire Circus* and written by

Marius Goring faces the power of primitive magic in *Charlie Boy*, a drama that echoes some themes used by Richard Matheson in his script for the 1975 TV film, *Trilogy of Terror*.

Bernie Cooper and Francis Megahy. Leigh Lawson, Angela Bruce and Marius Goring star in this tale of black magic and voodoo concerning an African carved wooden doll nicknamed "Charlie Boy" that, to the surprise of everyone except the viewers, turns out to be something more than a plaything.

THE SILENT SCREAM is not to be confused with the Barbara Steele shocker that made the rounds last summer. This was the episode that everyone was waiting for, marking the return to Hammer of Peter Cushing, and was written by Francis Essex and directed by Alan Gibson, who worked with Lee and Cushing on the last two Dracula movies from Hammer, *Dracula 1972 A.D.* and *The Satanic Rites of Dracula*. Cushing plays Martin Blueck, a pet shop owner who keeps a unique collection of wild animals in the basement of his shop. It's like a small private zoo with a strange twist—none of the cages has doors. When Chuck Spillers, played by Brian Cox, leaves prison he is befriended by Blueck, who offers him a job working in the pet shop, but Spillers is a habitual criminal and can't keep his hands off of Blueck's safe. His attempt to open it, however, meets with strange results.

CHILDREN OF THE FULL MOON, directed by Tom Clegg and written by Murray Smith, is the first in the series to bring back the creatures for which Hammer first became famous. Tom and Sarah Martin, played by Christopher Cazanove and Celia Gregory, are on a motoring holiday when their car goes out of control on a lonely forest road. They are taken in by a mysterious woman who lives in an isolated cottage deep in the forest, with only a number of children for company. During her stay, Sarah starts to have strange dreams about werewolves—but are they only dreams?

THE GUARDIAN OF THE ABYSS features Rosalyn Landor, the little girl in Terence Fisher's classic *The Devil Rides Out*, now grown into a beautiful woman. Directed by Don Sharp, who directed most of Hammer's early adventure epics as well as the now-classic *Kiss of the Vampire*, and written by Anthony Read. *Guardian* also stars John Carson as the leader of a coven of witches trying to raise the devil.

THE CARPATHIAN EAGLE is directed by Francis Megahy and written by Megahy and Bernie Cooper. The lovely and leggy Suzanne Danielle plays Natalie, who has written a book concerning a legendary Countess from Carpathia, a beautiful seductress whose pet eagle, according to legend, tore out the hearts of her lovers. No sooner is the book published than a series of gruesome murders bring the legend horrifically to life.

A VISITOR FROM THE GRAVE, written by Anthony Hinds under his Hammer pen-name, John Elder, harkens back to such psychological thrillers as *Taste of Fear*, *Nightmare* and *Hysteria*, again under the direction of Hammer stalwart Peter Sasdy, and starring Simon MacCordindale and Katherine Leigh Scott. Scott, as Penny, has just been released from a mental institution after suffering a mental breakdown. She is alone in her cottage when an intruder breaks in and she shoots and kills him. When her boyfriend returns home they bury the body in the woods, but from then on, everywhere that Penny goes she sees the intruder following her. There's a twist to this tale that you may see coming—but then there's a twist to the twist.

THE TWO FACES OF EVIL, definitely the weirdest story of the series, is directed by Alan Gibson, written by Ronald Graham and stars Gary Raymond, Anna Calder Marshall and Philip Latham. What is the threat hanging over the Lewis family as they set off on vacation? Who is the mysterious hitchhiker that they pick up on the way? Where did he come from and why does he try to murder the Lewis family? If you figure it out, let me know by

writing in care of this magazine. The episode's sole redeeming feature is a scene where Martin Lewis, played by Raymond, fights for his life with the hitchhiker after the car has crashed on a lonely road in the midst of a storm, very reminiscent of the opening fight between Dracula and Van Helsing from Gibson's *Dracula 1972 A.D.*

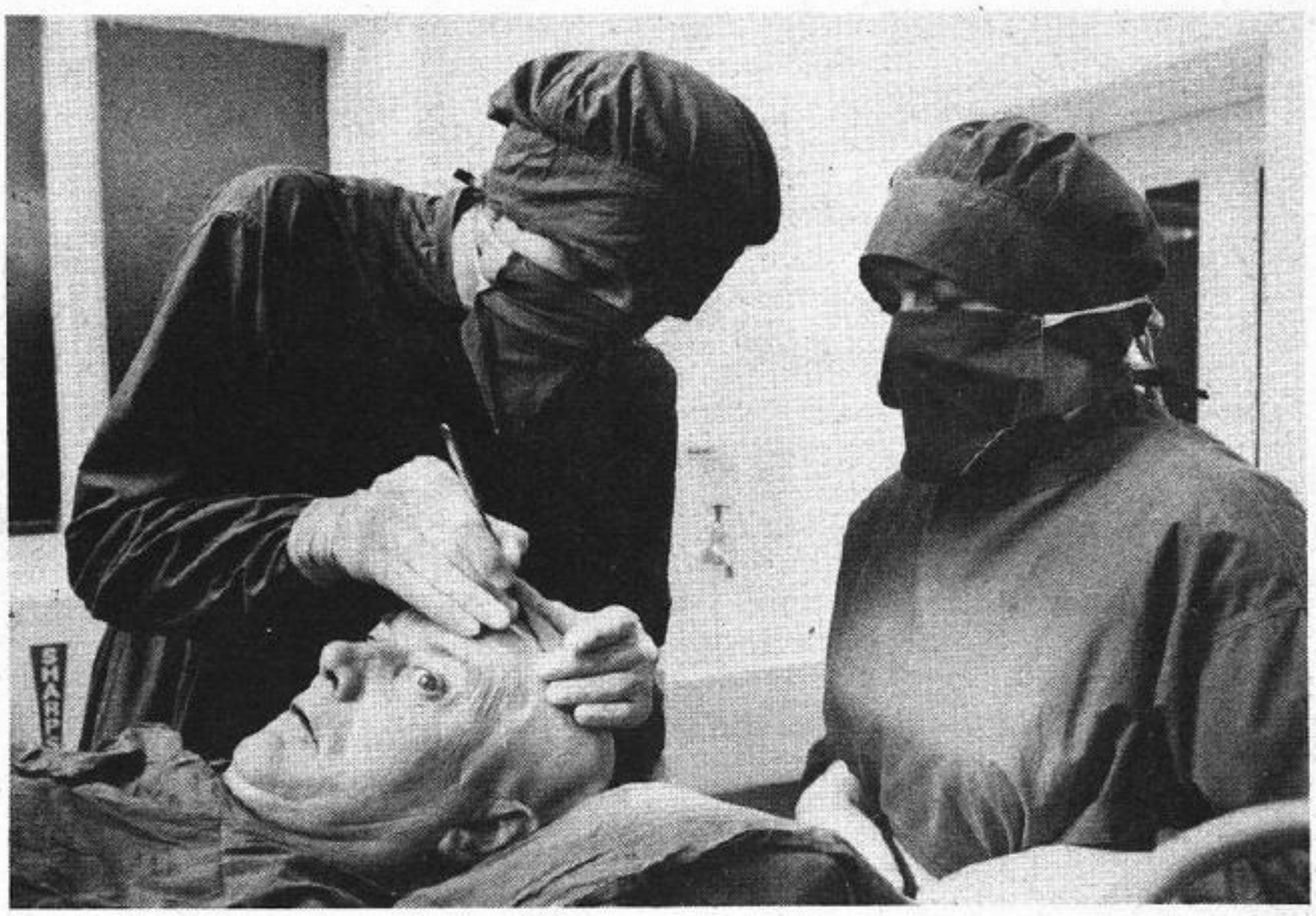
THE MARK OF SATAN, directed by Don Lever and written by Don Shaw, closes the first series. Peter McEnery plays Edwyn, a hospital mortuary attendant who develops an obsession with the number 9—wherever he goes he sees that number, or other numbers that add up to it. He comes to the conclusion that 9 is the universal number and that, since evil is also universal, 9 must be the number of evil. He goes for help from a priest, who points out that the Bible says that the mark of the beast is 666, not 9. This calms Edwyn a bit, until he realizes that 666 is 999 upside down, and that 6+6+6=18, 1+8=9! Then the headaches begin. . . .

The first series of *Hammer House of Horror* has been so successful on British TV that a new 13-part series should be rolling by the time you read this. It's not yet certain what format the next series will take, but Roy Skeggs has said that he would like to go back to the beginning, to the sort of entertainment that first made Hammer great, the gothic tales of vampires, werewolves and Dr. Frankenstein's creation. Skeggs has also said that, after the first few episodes were broadcast, he realised that much of the mail received was coming from the younger viewers of the Saturday evening program, so he cut down on the amount of nudity and explicit violence in the later-filmed programs, a policy that will probably extend to the second series as well.

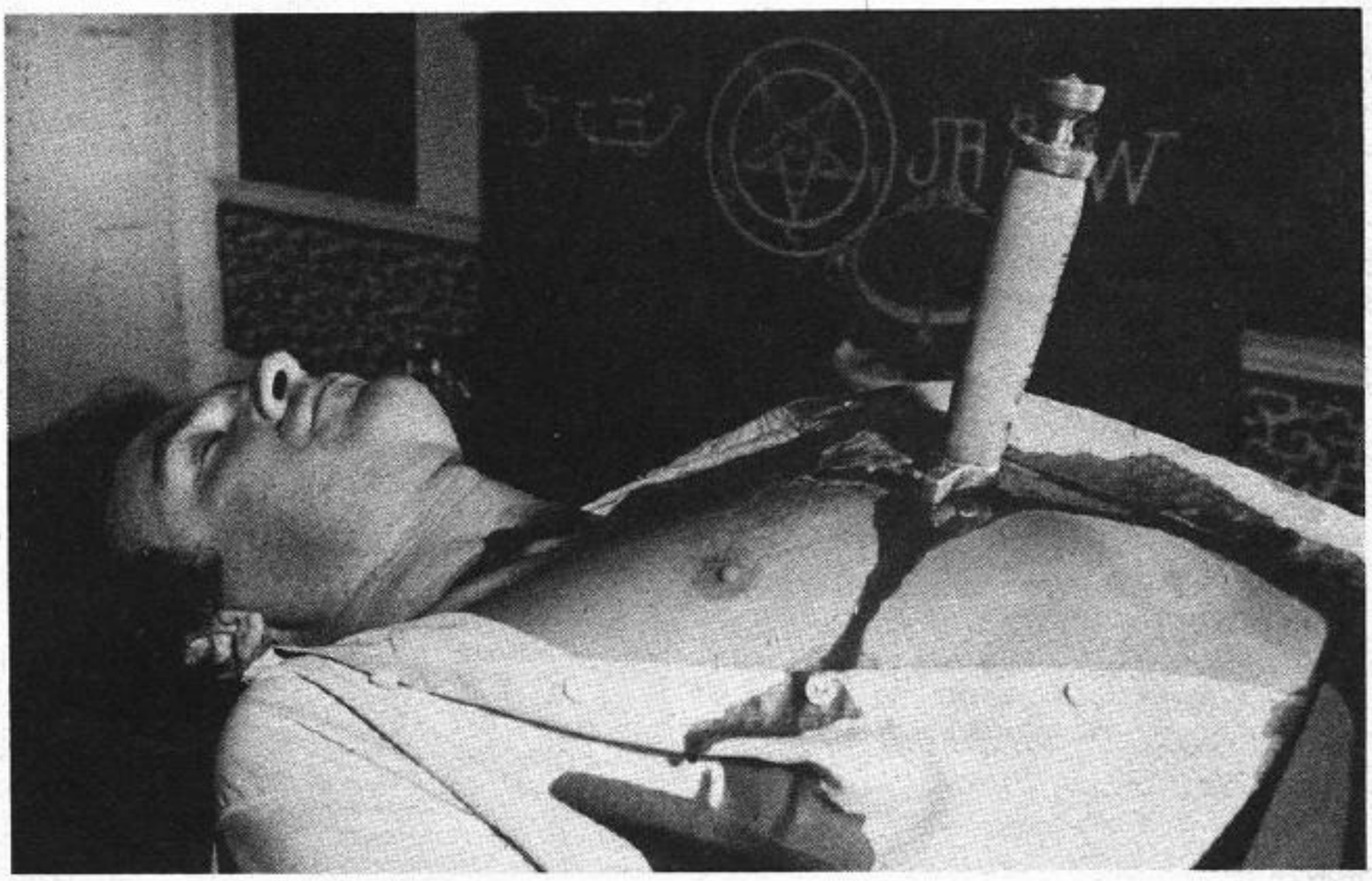
As of this writing, the manner of distribution for the series in the United States is still undetermined. A major stumbling block to placing the series in syndication is the explicitness of those early episodes. It does seem certain that the series will be seen in the states, possibly re-edited for commercial television, or on such pay-cable systems as Home Box Office or Showtime, or edited into a series of "anthology" films. And, of course, the second series, with its more "wholesome" approach, will have avoided such problems.

In the meantime, American fans should be pleased to know that Hammer is back with a vengeance, with 26 hours of their horror series completed or in production, a projected series on the adventures of Robin Hood in the planning stage, plus plans for a big budget horror film. After these projects, they hope to go into full swing with at least three films a year.

And so, Hammer has risen from the grave—or, to borrow a phrase from another TV show, Brian Lawrence took a company that was barely alive, and had the technology and the know-how to rebuild it!



Denholm Elliot finds himself in a living nightmare in *Rude Awakening*.



Ray Lonnen is a victim of satanic ritual in *Guardian of the Abyss*.

A young couple plagued by a mini-zombie in *Growing Pains*.

The CORMAN Interview

Part One

By LARRY FRENCH

Every movie that Roger Corman ever directed can be viewed as a classic of the genre. Considering the number of films that he has to his credit, that's a rather formidable statement—but it's true. There are directors who have made more films than Corman, especially in Italy, where audiences for gore-and-sex epics seldom demand that such films be enhanced with much of a plot, but none of these have so consistently shown Corman's flair for getting more out of less—a talent that served him especially well through most of the 50s and 60s, when he served double-duty as producer and director for AIP.

Though he was born in Los Angeles, Corman was in his mid-20s before he decided on a film career for himself. In 1947, at the age of 21, he graduated from Stanford University with a degree in engineering. After serving in the Navy, he did work for a time as a messenger boy for 20th Century Fox, and later was promoted to story consultant, but soon left for England to study postgraduate English. On his return, he started working as a literary agent in Hollywood, and started to write screenplays in his spare time—largely as a sideline. The first script he sold was titled *The House By The Sea*, which was bought by Allied Artists and made as *Highway Dragnet*, a title designed to capitalize on the popularity of Jack Webb's then-current TV police drama. Under the direction of Nathan Juran, Corman's script became a so-so thriller, starring Richard Conte as an accused murderer attempting to prove his innocence. By the time that film was released, Corman had received a serious bite from the movie bug. With $11,000 dollars to his name, he formed Palo Alto Productions and produced the first Corman film, a giant squid tale called *The Monster From The Ocean Floor*. Soon thereafter he began his lengthy association with American International Pictures (then called American Releasing, and now called Filmways), and by 1955 he was directing as well as producing the best low-budget pic-

Vincent Price and Joyce Jameson play catch with Peter Lorre's head in "The Black Cat."

tures of the period, including westerns, crime and action pictures, as well as such fantasy gems as *The Day The World Ended, It Conquered The World, Not of This Earth* and *Attack of the Crab Monsters*. But the most admired Corman AIP films are those of the Poe cycle, and they served as the starting point for the following interview.

At least two more installments of this interview will be appearing in future issues of FANGORIA, examining the past, present and future of New World Pictures and Mr. Corman.

FANG: *Tomb of Ligeia* was written by Robert Towne who went on to do *Chinatown, Shampoo* and *The Last Detail*. Although I thought the script was marvelous, Towne has indicated he is not very proud of the film. Why is that?

CORMAN: Primarily because it was written for a younger man. It was conceived of as a love story. Our original thought was to go for a full romantic love story. I was going to do it in England, and I thought I would get an all English cast, and just go for a very handsome young English actor, and play it more as a love story. AIP, however, wanted to go again with Vincent Price. I really think that Vincent is a brilliant actor, but he was not right for that role. The way we saw it the lead should have been 25 years old . . . maybe 30 years old tops. So it did change the orientation of the film quite a bit.

FANG: That's funny, because Vincent thinks *Ligeia* is one of the best Poe films.

CORMAN: Well, as a matter of fact it is. I think it is one of the best Poe films, and he was very good in it. Vincent 20 years earlier would have been perfect in the film. It was simply a matter of age. There was no criticism of Vincent in any possible way. He was excellent in the role. It's just that the original concept was for a very dashing, romantic, handsome, young leading man, which Vincent played in his youth and could have played.

FANG: Yes, perhaps something like he did in *Dragonwyck*.

CORMAN: It's interesting that you say that, because my wife has always liked Vincent's role in *Dragonwyck*. The character that Vincent played in *Dragonwyck* was exactly what we were looking for in this film, but as you know *Dragonwyck* was 20 or more years before.

FANG: Another thing about the script of *Ligeia*, is that the ending is really rather confusing.

CORMAN: That's partially in the script and partially my fault. It actually makes total sense. It was worked out quite meticulously, but it did become confusing, and I think we simply failed to make the transitions clear. As a matter of fact, at lunch one time, I was starting to become confused while shooting it. So I sat down with the script and I worked out a chart for myself, saying from page so & so . . . you know, from page 80 to page 82 it is Rowena. From page 82 to 85 it is Ligeia. So I had the chart so I wouldn't become confused myself! I think it was partially in the script and that there were too many transitions. We went back and forth so many times that eventually you got lost. It is actually totally correct. If anyone were interested . . . and I can't think of why anyone should be . . . they could stop the film, look at it, and run a chart. They would see it all adds up, exactly correct. However for me to say that, does not excuse the fact that the film itself becomes confusing to audiences.

FANG: That's like what happened on *The Big Sleep*, where Howard Hawks had to call William Faulkner and find out who murdered whom, and nobody knew!

CORMAN: Actually, somebody wrote something on *The Big Sleep*, someone doing a thesis at a film school, which said it could not have taken place! The people who were supposed to have done certain things, were already established in different places in the film, and could not have possibly done what they were supposed to have done.

FANG: Another person who didn't like *Ligeia* and *Masque of the Red Death* as well was Sam Arkoff. He said they weren't as scary and didn't make much money.

CORMAN: Well, *Ligeia* actually did make money, but it didn't make as much as previous ones. I think that the statement that the ones made in England were not as scary is probably legitimate. The fault may have been mine. I was becoming more interested in the Poe films as expressions of the unconscious, than as pure horror films. Actually, they were never pure horror films, they were a certain type of a film that had horror in them. As I started to move in the direction of comedy with *The Raven* and *Tales of Terror*, or love story with *Ligeia*, I think Sam is quite correct in sayng the horror content of those films diminished.

FANG: *Masque of the Red Death* has very little of the AIP type of horror thrills. It seemed to be more artistic.

CORMAN: Well *Masque* is more philosophical. We were dealing with the plague, and it was fear of death per se, not fear of any violence. It was not what AIP wanted though.

FANG: Vincent said he never knew how much authority you had on those films. Weren't there quite a few conferences, for instance on *House of Usher*?

CORMAN: I generally had a great deal of authority. I got along very well with Jim and Sam, and we really had a very successful relationship for number of years. They would primarily be interested in certain areas. We would mutually decide what film we were going to make, and the budget, and sometimes the principal actors. Beyond that, I was pretty much left to my own devices. There would sometimes be meetings and discussions on some points, but not a great deal. I had a lot of freedom with AIP.

FANG: Sam Arkoff seemed to imply that it was his idea to film *House of Usher*, because it was by a well-know author whose work was in the public domain.

CORMAN: That really isn't true. It was my idea to shoot *House of Usher*. I had wanted to do it for a long, long, time. What had been happening is that I had been making low budget films to go out as a double bill. They wanted me to make two black and white horror films. So at a lunch

Corman on the set of Tomb of Ligeia, the only Poe film to go on location.

meeting with Jim and Sam I said, "Rather than make two black and white films for $100,000 each, why not make one color film for $200,000 or more, and put everything into that one? I would like to make *The Fall of the House of Usher*." After some discussion they agreed. That's how the film came about. I had always remembered reading the story in school. The only difference we had is I wanted to call it *The Fall of the House of Usher*, and Jim insisted on calling it the *House of Usher*, because he felt it was a shorter title and would fit on the marquee better. I said you could still put *House of Usher* on the marquee, but it should be called *Fall of the House of Usher*, because that is the title of the story.

FANG: Who decided to use Richard Matheson for the screenplay?

CORMAN: Jim and I picked him jointly. Matheson was a well respected young science fiction and fantasy writer at the time. He had written a number of short stories, some novels and had done one screenplay previously. So he was a good choice. He did a very good job, and went on to do a number of scripts, both for me and AIP. I was always very pleased with his work.

FANG: What about Vincent Price? Arkoff said he made the deal to get him.

CORMAN: Yes, that's true. We jointly agreed that Vincent Price should play the lead, but the deal was actually made by Sam. We all wanted Vincent. We discussed various cast members in depth. I don't even remember who came up with the idea of Vincent. What we would normally do is discuss three, four or more leading men, and then jointly decide on the man we wanted. I think we all agreed that Vincent was the correct choice.

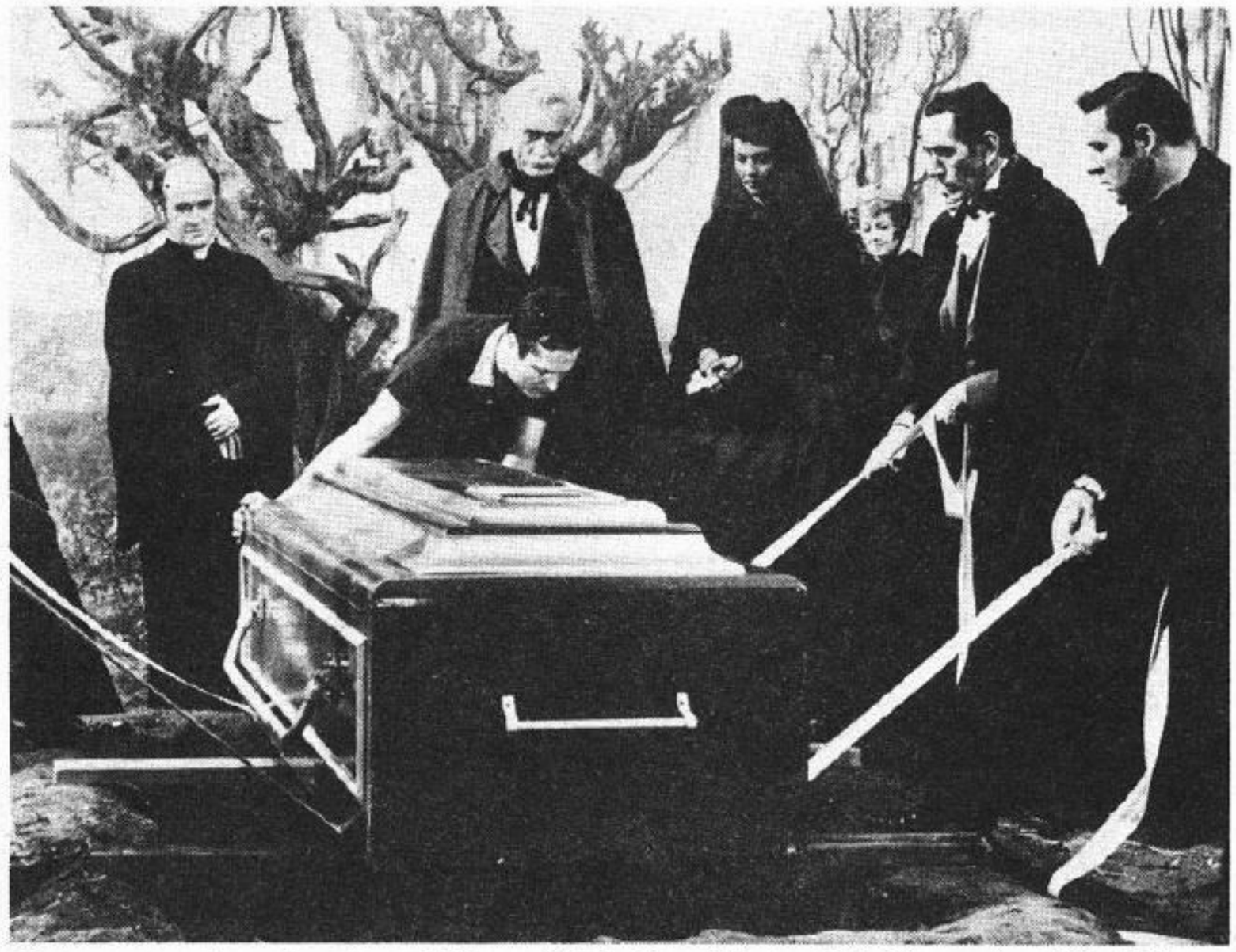
FANG: Who else did you consider?

CORMAN: I don't remember who the other people were actually. I think Vincent was the number one choice.

Price and Corman consult on a scene during the making of *House of Usher*.

FANG: Well you didn't use Vincent in *The Premature Burial*, but Ray Milland instead. How about someone like Christopher Lee? I think I saw somewhere that you considered him at one point.

CORMAN: No. Ray Milland was my first choice. The reason I didn't use Vincent is that the picture was to be made away from AIP. It was not going to be an AIP film. We had a disagreement on how some profits were to be divided on some previous film. So I decided to do *The Premature Burial* away from AIP. Vincent at the time was under exclusive contract to AIP, so I could not use Vincent. Pathe Lab was going to start their own distribution company so they agreed to co-finance the film with me, and my brother Gene. Then I remember the first day of shooting, Jim and Sam appeared on the set. I thought this is very nice. Here I am doing the first of these films away from AIP, and here they are to wish me good luck. They came over while we were lighting the set with a big smile and shook hands, and Sam said "Welcome back to American International." I said, "What do you mean Sam?" Well the day before they bought the rights back from Pathe Lab, so it became an AIP picture again. Sam had pointed out that AIP could well take its lab business somewhere else if Pathe was going to compete with AIP.



Corman, center, checks out the coffin before filming *The Premature Burial*.

FANG: In *The Premature Burial*, you have several scenes which verge on comedy. Did you try to give the films an underflow of humor?

CORMAN: Yes. There's a very fine line between horror and humor. On *The Premature Burial* I did some reading, and talked with psychologists, one who had written a book called *Beyond Laughter*. In it, he discussed the psychological origins of laughter and terror, which he felt were two sides of the same coin. So we were trying to give just a touch of humor into the film. I think horror and humor work very well together but you have to be very careful, if the humor goes too far it overwhelms the horror. Now as we went on with the Poe films we deliberately worked for more humor in several of them. A couple of them simply became comedies. The Black Cat in *Tales of Terror* is a full comedy. I shouldn't say full comedy, it's a comedy with horror, whereas the other films might be a horror film with comedy. In *The Raven* we tried to integrate both horror and comedy. You have to be very careful as to the blending of the two.

FANG: What prompted the decision to make "The Black Cat" a full comedy, in *Tales of Terror*?

CORMAN: I think the same decision that led to the humor later in *The Raven*. There was a feeling in my mind, and to a certain extent in Dick Matheson's mind, that we were in danger of repeating ourselves. Of course all of thse things are long ago, and sometimes you don't remember exactly, but I think I do remember. I was starting to set up shots too closely to the way I set up shots in previous pictures, even sequences would start to become too similar to previous sequences. So we were trying to vary them, to make the films different. One of the ways to do that was to vary the approach. Comedy was a nice way to vary it. We varied it a differnt way in the *Tomb of Ligeia*, when we made it to a certain extent a love story, where in previous pictures the love element was either non-existent, or was very, very slight. There's always a way to find a different look. That's the reason I eventually stopped. After *Tomb of Ligeia* I stopped. I didn't want to make any more Poe films, because I felt I had already begun to repeat myself. What was happening in the effort not to repeat myself, I was moving farther and farther away from Poe.

FANG: Apparently there's still a script for *The Gold Bug*, which Vincent said he really wanted to make. Would you consider going back to a Poe subject if you direct again?

CORMAN: I might go back now, because it would be a whole different generation, and a different time. On *The Gold Bug* we had two scripts. I had one script written by Chuck Griffith, which was a complete farce. That one went wildest of all into comedy. It was just outrageous. It really had some tremendously funny things in it, I must say. This was set in the south after the Civil War. Vincent Price was a plantation owner, who had convinced his one remaining slave, to be played by Sammy Davis, Jr., that the south had won the Civil War. So Sammy Davis was Vincent's only slave left on this deserted plantation. It was very funny, but at that point I said to Chuck, "There's hardly any Poe left in the story." It was becoming outrageously distanced from the original concept. So we decided not to make it, although it was very funny.

FANG: Vincent said that they wanted to turn *The Gold Bug* into a horror story, and he wanted to do it as in Poe, as a story of detection.

CORMAN: That's it. Everybody was starting to say each picture is becoming alike, let's start varying them, and everybody had different ways to vary them.

FANG: Of course you're right when you say you were repeating yourself, because the "Morella" segment of *Tales of Terror* is really just a miniature version of the previous films.

CORMAN: Yes, that was one of the reasons we did a comedy, in order to break away, and bring something totally different into the film.

FANG: Well, the "Valdemar" segment of *Tales of Terror* was certainly different without being a comedy, and Basil Rathbone was quite marvelous.

CORMAN: Yes, he was excellent. I worked well with Basil. He was very well prepared. He would come in knowing his lines to the letter, with an interpretation, we would discuss the part a little bit, and he required a minimum amount of direction, as did Vincent. These were both intelligent professional actors, who knew that we would discuss before the film the approach, and they would come in prepared to give fully realized performances. In "Valdemar" the main problem was an interesting technical problem. It was almost all dialogue in one room, which is not according to my theories of film. I do not like scripts that are primarily dialogue in one room. I think you have too much of a stage play and not enough of a motion picture. The problem then became how to shoot a dialogue stage play in one room, on a short schedule, and still break it up and give it visual movement. The answer that seemed right to me, was to give a lot of movement to the actors and the camera, and to use effective editing techniques.

FANG: You mentioned that there were a couple of moments of trouble with Boris Karloff in *The Raven*. Well in a *Films & Fantasy* interview (May, 1965), Boris is quoted as saying he had to find his own way, and if he asked you for advice you'd say "You're experienced actors, get on with it. I know what I'm going to do."

CORMAN: That is totally false. I would have never said something like that. It's ridiculous. I would work with Boris and discuss the role as with any actor. I doubt that Boris said that. I would think it's a misquote. I have been misquoted so many times myself, I'm sure Boris was misquoted. In the first place such a thing would never have happened, and he would never say that.

FANG: I think that the impression was more that Boris felt you were perhaps more concerned with the camera angles and things than with the actors.

CORMAN: He might have had some such impression, but I always tried to work as much as I possibly could with the actors, on a short schedule. It's quite clear that if you're going to be working as much with the actors, say as you could if you had 100 days. Obviously you would be spending more time, and getting more rehearsal time, and more work with the actors on a longer schedule. It is unfortunately one of the problems of low budget productions. We were working so fast that what I would do sometimes is be rehearsing scenes while something else was going on. In other words, I stepped away from the main set, probably while they were lighting it, and I would jump over, find the table we were going to be working on the next set, so I could rehearse here, even though that set wasn't ready at that time. Therefore, I could be working ahead of what we were going to be doing next.

FANG: With such a short schedule, it seems incredible you could get these intricate tracking shots involving actors, even with rehearsals. How many takes would you generally need?

CORMAN: I averaged about three. I would seldom print the first take. I would sometimes print the first. I would generally print take two, three, four or five. I would say I averaged three or four takes.

FANG: Jack Nicholson was doing about 50 takes for Stanley Kubrick on *The Shining*.

CORMAN: Jack made a great comment. Kubrick went a hundred and some takes on one shot, and after it was over Jack said to him, "You know Stanley, this is all very good, but I generally peak around the fiftieth take."

End of Part I.

Vincent Price is ready to exhume his wife in *The Tomb of Ligeia*.

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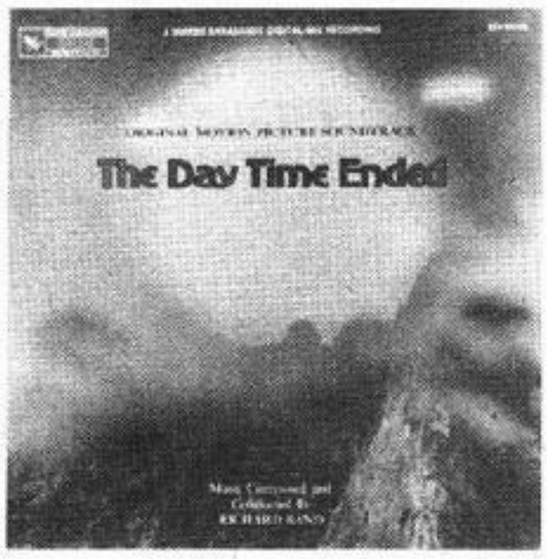

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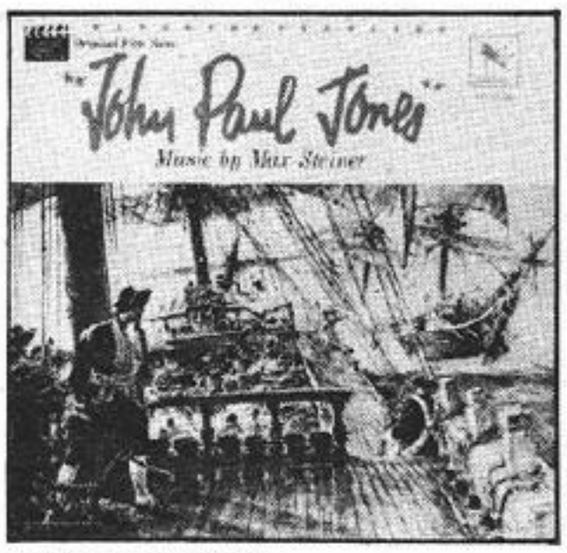

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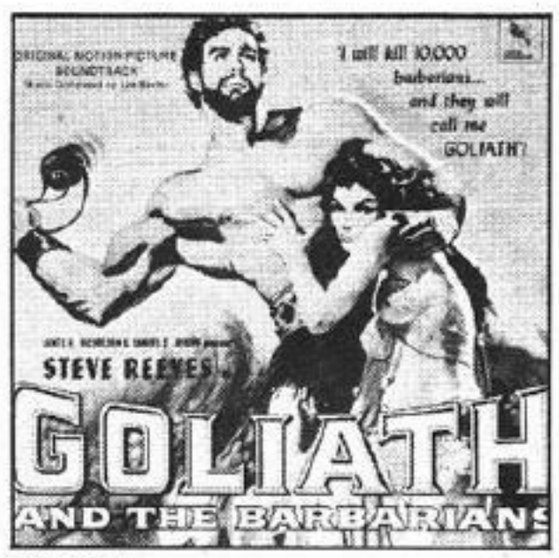

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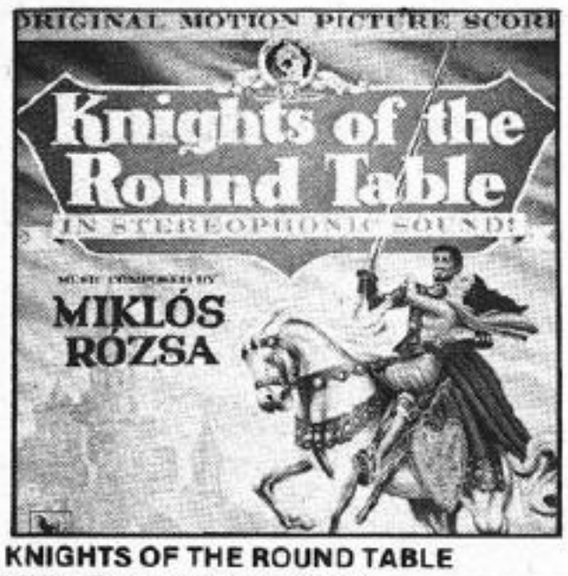

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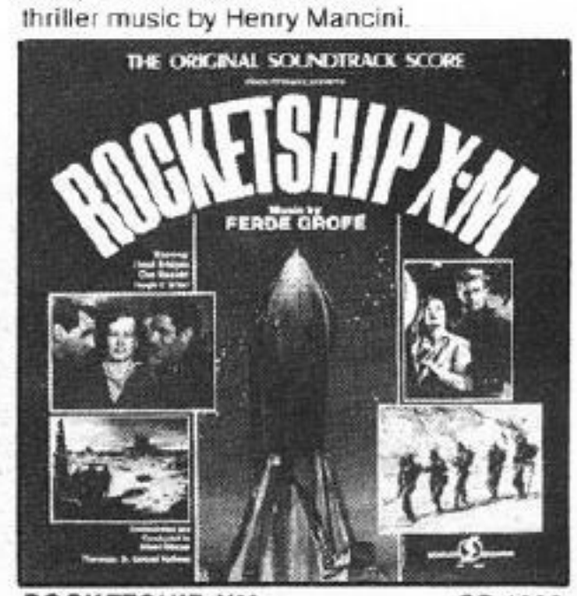

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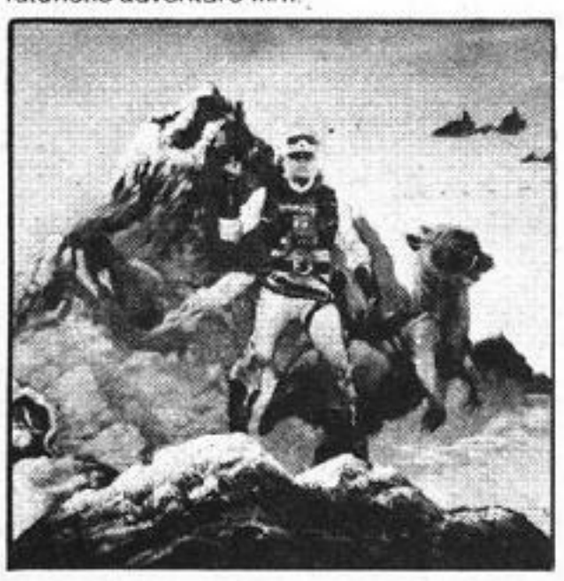

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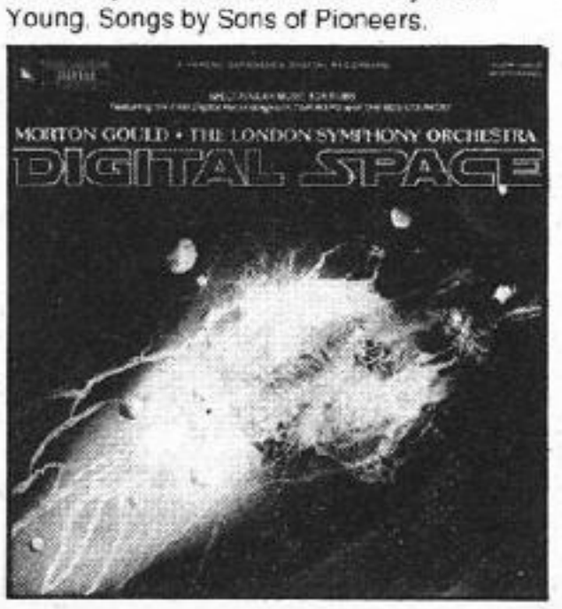
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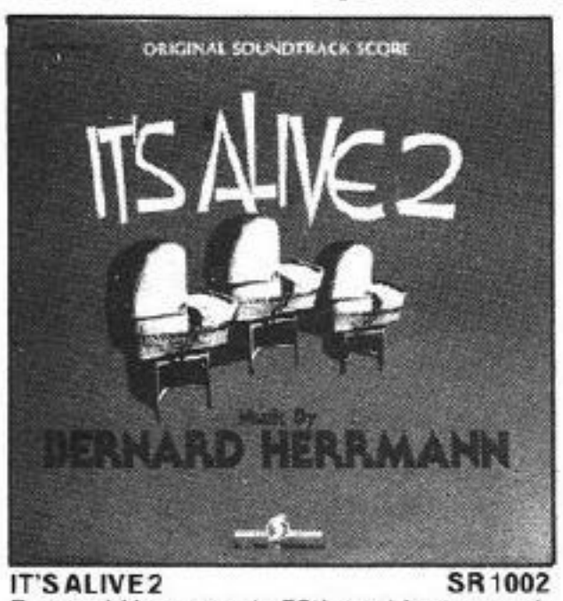

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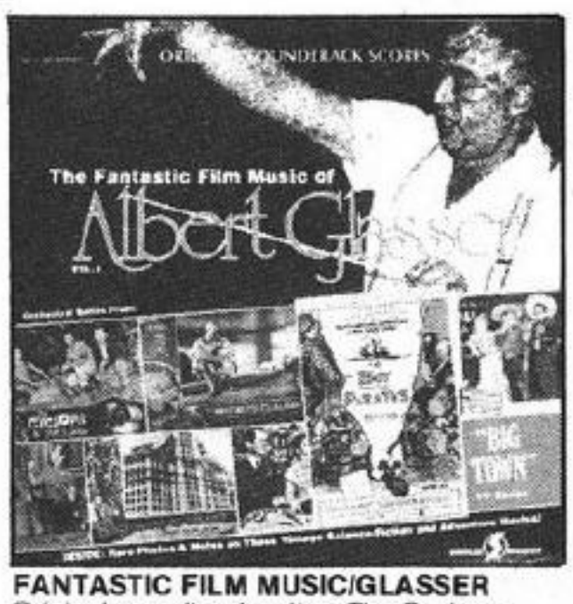

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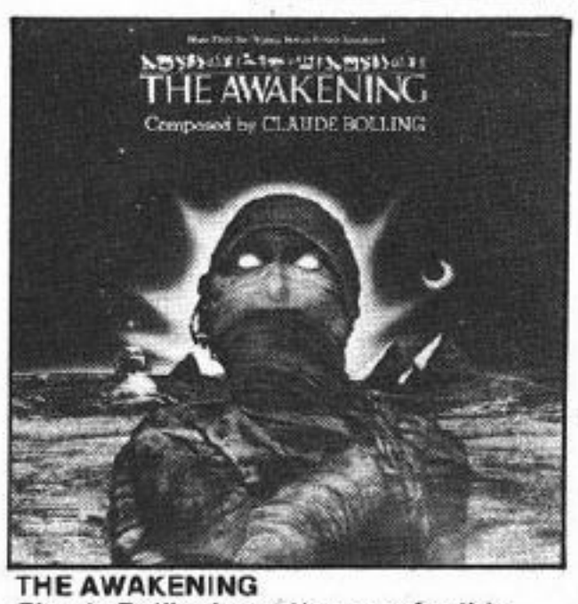

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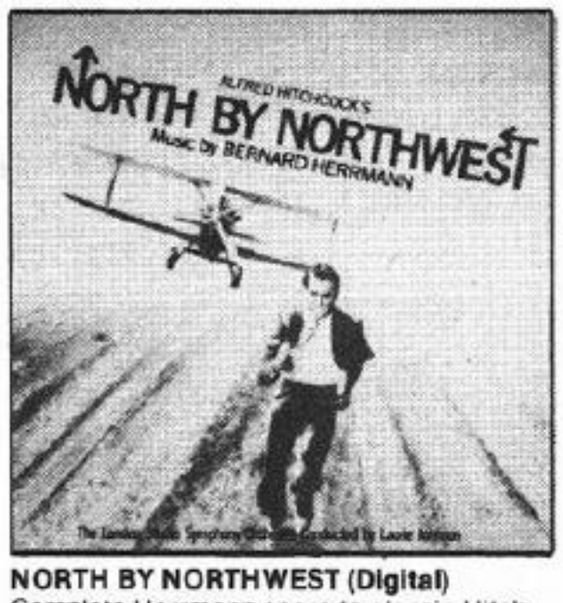

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King of the Gimmicks

When William Castle makes a picture,
you had better be prepared for ***something!***

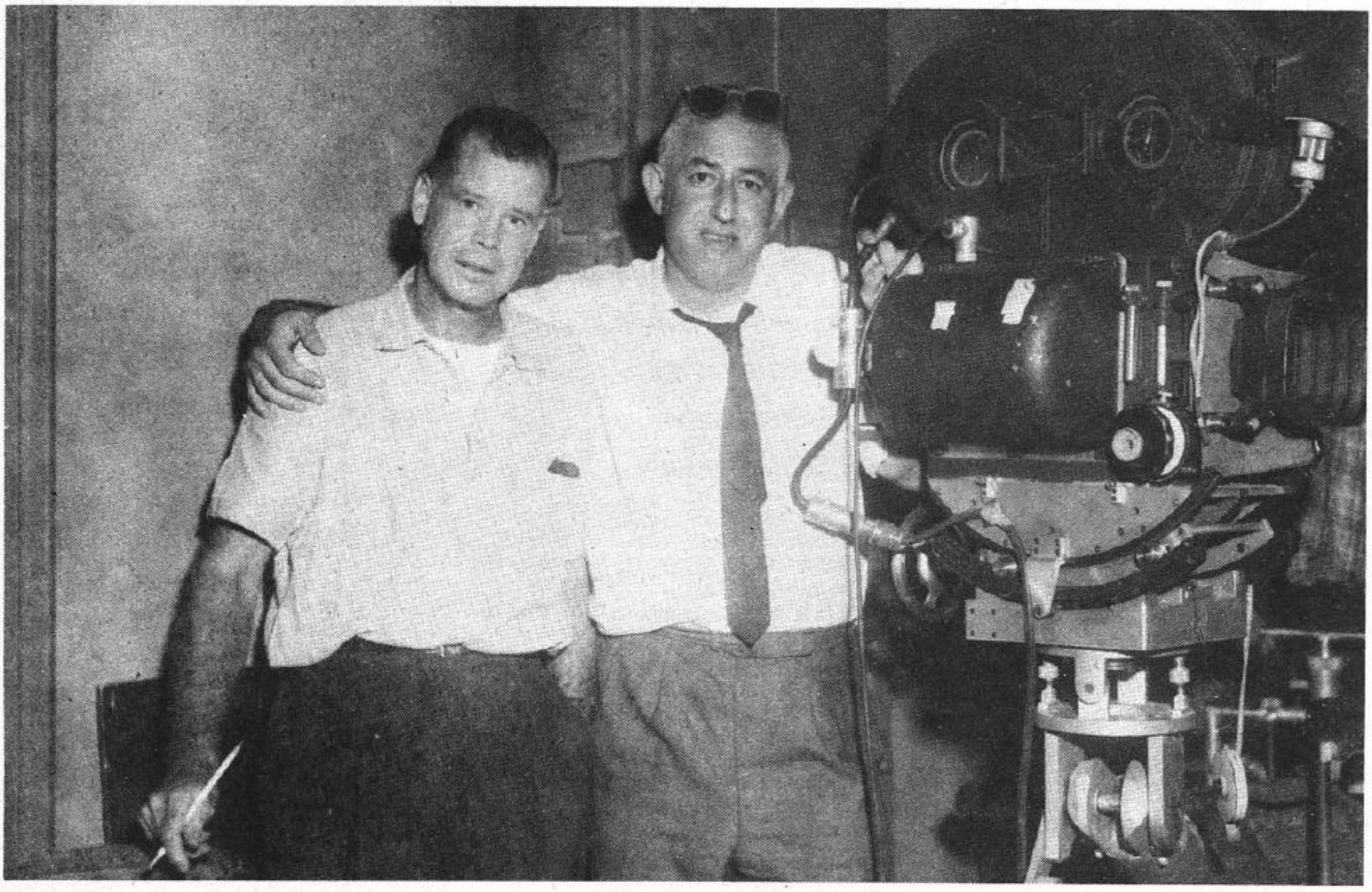
By MARK THOMAS McGEE

Nervous giggles ignite throughout an uneasy audience as Patricia Breslin cautiously approaches a gloomy old mansion. Everyone knows that inside the house is Jean Arless, a knife-wielding homicidal maniac. the audience slides toward the edge of their collective seats. Suddenly the action stops! A clock appears on the screen and a voice announces "This is the Fright Break!" Anyone too frightened to see the end of the picture could step to the "Coward's Corner" and get their full admission refunded. The film . . . *Homicidal* (1961).

The "Fright Break" idea and the voice of the announcer belonged to William Castle, purveyor of Zotz coins, Punishment Poll Cards and Ghost Viewers. The last of the great showmen; a producer-director who admittedly modeled his motion picture career after P. T. Barnum. Castle's penchant for gimmicks was first born from necessity, the bait to hook customers to his low-budget, starless pictures. But as his reputation grew he took pride in his gimmicks then later became disdainful of them, wanting to be acknowledged as a serious film-maker. In the end, having failed to make his desired mark on the industry, Castle was forced to take whatever solace he could find in his niche as "King of the Gimmicks."

As a child growing up in New York, William Castle often spent hours in front of a mirror re-creating the make-up worn by Lon Chaney in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. He had little interest in school, spending most of his spare time doing odd jobs for David Belasco, a Broadway producer. Five years after the death of his parents, he decided to become an actor, landing his first speaking part by passing himself off as Samuel Goldwyn's nephew. He was fifteen then. By the time he was eighteen he'd been a stage manager and directed his first play, prophetically enough *Dracula*.

Castle's first brush with ballyhoo varies from telling to telling. It seems that in the late 30s he was directing a play with a German actress who had then recently refused Hitler's request that she return to her homeland. Supposedly Castle gave the local newspapers an exaggerated tale



Gimmick master William Castle, right, with writer Robb White on the set of *House on Haunted Hill*.

Movie poster for *The Tingler*. The theater seats were wired to give a mild electric jolt.

about how the actress had risked her life by defying the Nazi leader. Another account of the same incident tells of Castle tossing bricks through the theater's windows and painting swastikas all over the walls. Whichever, boxoffice returns indicated that he was doing something right.

After a brief stint in radio, Columbia mogul Harry Cohn took Bill under his wing and taught him every facet of movie making before letting him direct his first feature, appropriate titled *The Chance of a Lifetime* (1943). Cohn then relegated his shy and quiet new director to potboilers like *Drums of Tahiti* (1954) and *New Orleans Uncensored* (1955). After a number of such pictures, for Monogram and Universal as well, Castle felt that he was ready to produce. Cohn wouldn't let him so Bill moved into television. He was producing *Meet McGraw* and *Men of Anapolis* when he and his wife, Ellen, saw Henri-Georges Clouzot's suspense thriller *Diabolique* (1955), the movie that altered his career. "I realized we hadn't had a good suspense film in nearly a decade. I sold out of the TV series, mortgaged my house, cleaned out my bank account, put everything I had—about $90,000—into making a movie . . . " It was to be based on a novel called *The Marble Forest* by Theo Durrant, a pseudonym for twelve authors* who had each written a chapter of the book. Castle changed the title to *Macabre* (1958), taking a cue from Clouzot's film. He told writer Robb White, a wartime Navy air commander who worked on the *Men of Anapolis* series, about it. "He was interested," Castle remembered, "even after I explained that I needed about $150,000 to produce it. Thinking it over for what seemed to be just a moment, he said he not only would like to do the script but also would give me the money to make the picture." White immediately wrote out a check and the two men formed a company, Susina Association. *Macabre* was photographed in six days.

*The twelve authors were Terry Adler, Anthony Boucher, Eunice Mays Boyd, Florence Austin Faulkner, Allen Hymnson, Cary Lucas, Dana Lyon, Lenore Glen Offord, Virginia Rath, Virginia Shattuck, Darwin L. Teilhet, and William Worley.

"When I finished I looked at it and recognized that a Clouzot I ain't. I had to have a gimmick to sell that movie." And he dreamed up a beauty. He persuaded Lloyds of London to insure anyone who saw the film for $1000 against death by fright. "Of course it would be an awful thing if somebody actually did die in the theater," Castle told White but added shamelessly: "The publicity would be terrific though."

Several studios turned down the film before Steve Broidy at Allied Artists decided to gamble on it. Broidy wasn't sorry. Neither was Castle. Broidy had given him $150,000 plus seven per cent of the profit. The picture grossed well over a million dollars. When it was premiered, the wife of a Los Angeles *Times'* movie critic approached Castle in the theater's lobby and demanded to know why he chose to make such trash. "I've got to make money," he told the angry woman who had had to take a nitroglycerin capsule following a particularly unpleasant close-up of a rotting corpse. "This is what the public wants. When I've made enough money, I'll make better pictures."

Next came *House on Haunted Hill* (1959) which was slightly better than *Macabre* but not significantly so. Again he teamed with Georgia born Robb White. The movie was supposedly, in Castle's own words, "a serious effort to tell a chilling story in a haunted house with all the stops pulled out." It was, in fact, another *Diabolique* rip-off, with plot twists piling upon plot

twists. It was photographed in an "amazing" new screen process called "Emergo" in which "the thrills fly right into the audience." The "thrills" consisted of a single luminous skeleton, released from a concealed box at the top side of the screen at an appropriate moment.

Bill moved back to Columbia for his next collaboration with White, *The Tingler* (1959), surely the most bizarre film of his career. The story concerned a doctor's efforts to capture an organism that he believed existed within every human being: a grotesque caterpiller-like creature that grows from the base of the spine during moments of fear. This time theater seats were wired for mild electric shocks and it was called "PerceptoVision." Newspaper ads assured patrons that "the Tingler" would definitely break loose in the theater during each performance. In his autobiography, *Step Right Up! I'm Gonna Scare the Pants off America*, published by G. P. Putnum's Sons, Castle related an amusing story about one bored projectionist who decided to rehearse the electric shock equipment a week early, giving an unwanted dose of "Percepto" to a serene group of elderly women who were watching *The Nun's Story*.

"Ghost Viewers" were the gimmick for Castle's next entry, *13 Ghosts* (1960). Portions of the film were photographed in blue, the ghosts double-exposed on the backgrounds in a light magenta. By looking through either the red or blue strips of cellophane on the viewer, one could choose to see or not see the apparitions. There was, unfortunately, no third color to obscure the image entirely.

The second film to have a marked influence on Castle's output was Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960). So impressed was Castle with the affect the picture had that he and Robb White quickly hurried out their own psycho-thriller, *Homicidal*. Thereafter, Castle more or less moved away from horror fantasies to psychological thrillers. "I've always wanted to do the Hitchcock kind of picture," Castle stated shortly after *Homicidal's* release. "I never got a chance to come close before I went into business for myself; I was always stuck with directing westerns or action pictures." Castle's obsession with re-creating Hitchcock's now famous shower scene became as be-labored as his childhood need to emulate Chaney's Hunchback make-up. Finally he teamed with *Psycho's* author, Robert Bloch, to do a brutal murder mystery titled *Straight-Jacket* (1964).

Again with Bloch, only this time for Universal, Castle launched into another psychological drama, *The Night Walker* (1964), this one about strange dreams that haunt Barbara Stanwyck. And when his next picture, *I Saw What You Did* (1965—written by William McGivern), contained still

Robert Bloch wrote *Strait-Jacket* in 1964.

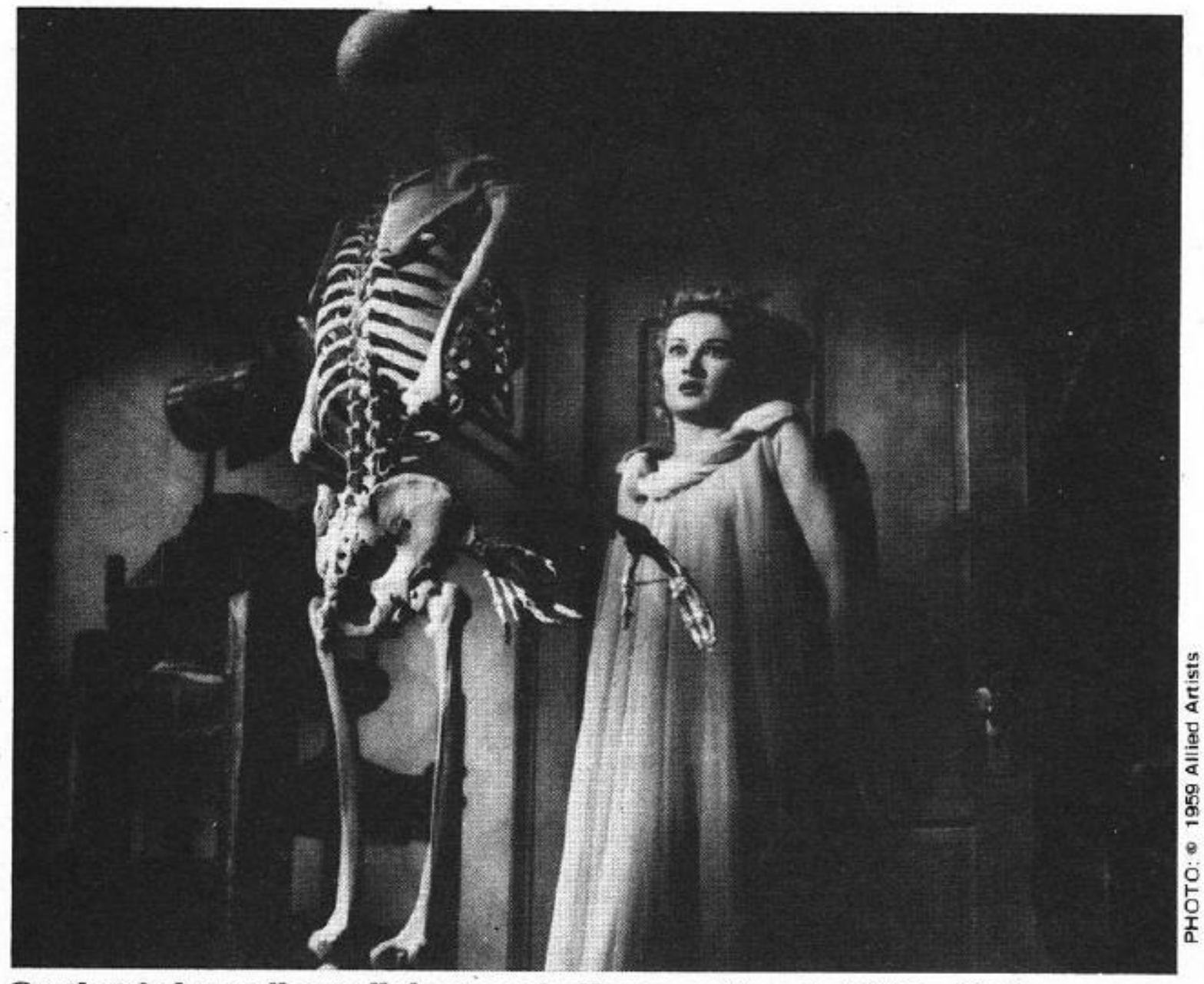
another grisly bathroom murder it became painfully obvious that Castle desperately wanted to be another Hitchcock but hadn't the talent or originality. *Let's Kill Uncle* (1966), an unsuccessful suspense comedy, ended his brief career at Universal.

Castle was a strong believer in meeting his public first hand. "I'll go to a theater and I'll stand in line with the rest of the people, the poor slobs—of which I am one—and I'll stand in line, buy my ticket, buy my popcorn, sit down,and talk to people. I'm a talky guy." But in spite of this contact, Castle couldn't get a handle on what people wanted to see. After nearly one-hundred pictures, he was a man without a gimmick.

Then he read the galleys of Ira Levin's novel *Rosemary's Baby*. At last Castle saw an opportunity to make a prestigious horror film. But Levin turned down his $100,000 offer for the rights. The author wanted nothing to do with a schlock-master like Castle. So Bill set up a dummy corporation and was able to purchase the book surreptitiously.

As if suddenly struck with some idea of his own limitations, Castle decided to only produce *Rosemary's Baby* (1968) and leave directing chores to Roman Polanski. It turned out to be William Castle's most successful motion picture, both critically and financially. And it didn't even have a gimmick.

"I wanted all my life to prove to Hollywood that I wasn't just a gimmick maker, but a film-maker," he told one reporter. But when the time finally arrived he couldn't enjoy it. Christopher Komeda, the film's music composer, went into a coma and later died. Sharon Tate was murdered. Castle himself was rushed to the hospital with uremic poisoning. He began thinking the film was a jinx. He became afraid to walk the streets. For the first time in his life he wanted no publicity. He went through analysis and shock therapy.



Castle tried to pull out all the stops in *House on Haunted Hill* in 1959.

Naturally the success of *Rosemary's Baby* prompted Paramount to plan a sequel, commissioning W. D. Richter (*Dracula, Invasion of the Body Snatchers*) to script *Rosemary's Baby Number Two*. But Castle wanted no part of the project which may have caused its demise. He also turned down *The Exorcist* because it offended him. "If you have one scene on top of another dripping with violence and terror—an audience gets anesthetized. Y'see, it's the expectation, the apprehension of death, rather than the killing itself, that is horrifying. The clutching hand that threatens the neck is more frightening than the same hand around the throat choking the victim to death."

Castle moved into television in 1972 producing *Ghost Story*, later changed to *Circle of Fear*. During the show's brief run he frantically attempted to develop a new gimmick, "William Castle's Ultrasonic Sound of Terror." A high-pitched sound, capable of arousing mild anxiety, was to be added to the musical track at critical moments. It never materialized.

Bug (1975), a cockamamie movie about fire-spitting cockroaches, was William Castle's last film. Once again he didn't direct but did have an idea for a new gimmick: a floor-mounted windshield wiper that would softly brush across the moviegoers feet and ankles at crucial moments of the picture. The idea was dropped when exhibitors felt audiences might panic if they felt anything brush across their legs. "I didn't argue the point because I knew that in some of the older theaters across America, the real things would crawl across the patron's legs at no cost."

At the age of sixty-three William Schloss (his real name) was dead from a heart attack. He had been developing a project titled *2000 Lakeview Drive*. It would have been his 107th film.

"I tried to go straight one time," he told one interviewer shortly before his death. "I made a comedy called *Zotz* (1962). I thought I'd change my pace. Walt Disney called me and said 'This is my kind of picture, not yours. I'd like to buy it from you for Fred MacMurray.' It lost money and I wired Walt; 'Wish you'd bought it.'"

If *Rosemary's Baby* was Bill's one moment of glory, he also took some enjoyment in the fact that film students were taking an interest in some of his earlier efforts, though he was somewhat perplexed by the psychological meanings being attributed to them. In the end, and in spite of his wish to be known as a great film-maker, William Castle was first and last a showman, a fact he apparently realized. In one of his last interviews, which appeared in *Time* magazine he is quoted as saying: "I've pulled many stunts and I still will pull many stunts. I know I'm a darned good showman; no one could top my gimmicks."

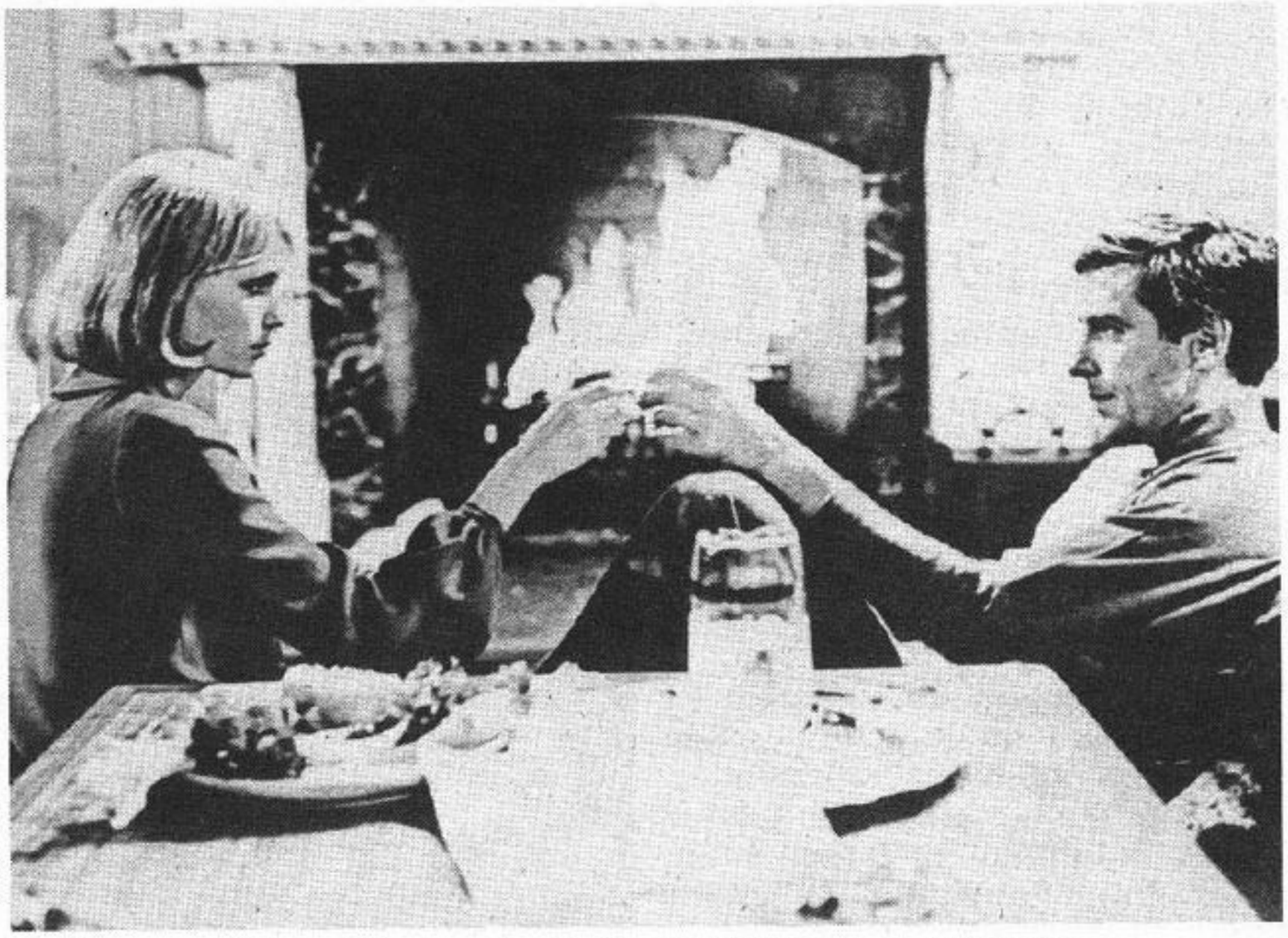
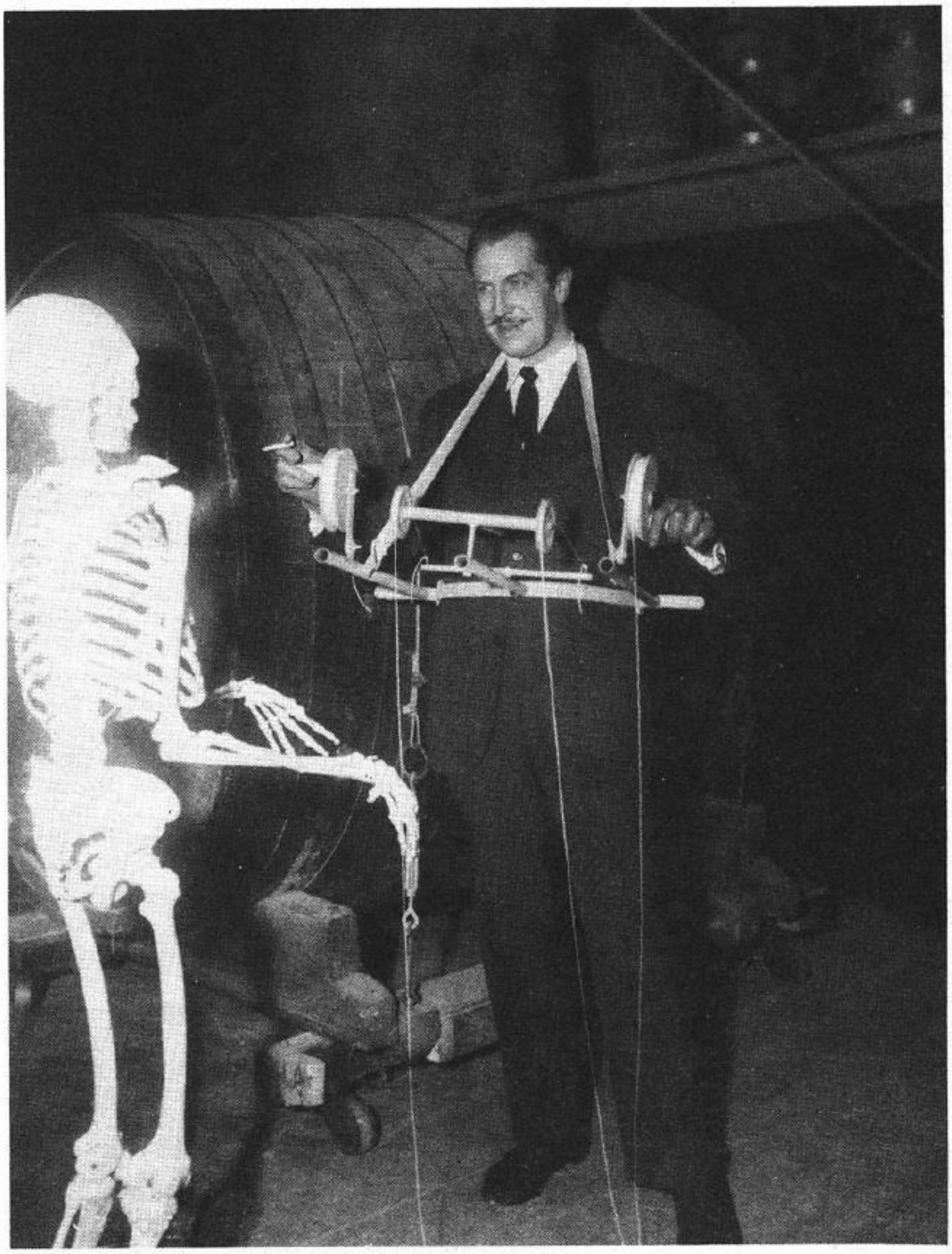


PHOTO: © 1981 Paramount Pictures

Mia Farrow and John Cassavettes in Castle's hit, *Rosemary's Baby*.



Vincent Price works the skeleton for fun during *House on Haunted Hill*.

The Real Tobe Hooper

A conversation with the director of Texas Chainsaw Massacre, Funhouse *and a new project in collaboration with Steven Spielberg!*

By BOB MARTIN

All things come to those who wait—and we've been waiting for the longest time for the chance to speak with Tobe Hooper. After trying several paths in the last two years (letters to his agent, contact through publicity people and the producers of *Funhouse*), we were afraid that we might remain forever subject to communication breakdown and Hooper's acknowledged shyness of "fan press" folk.

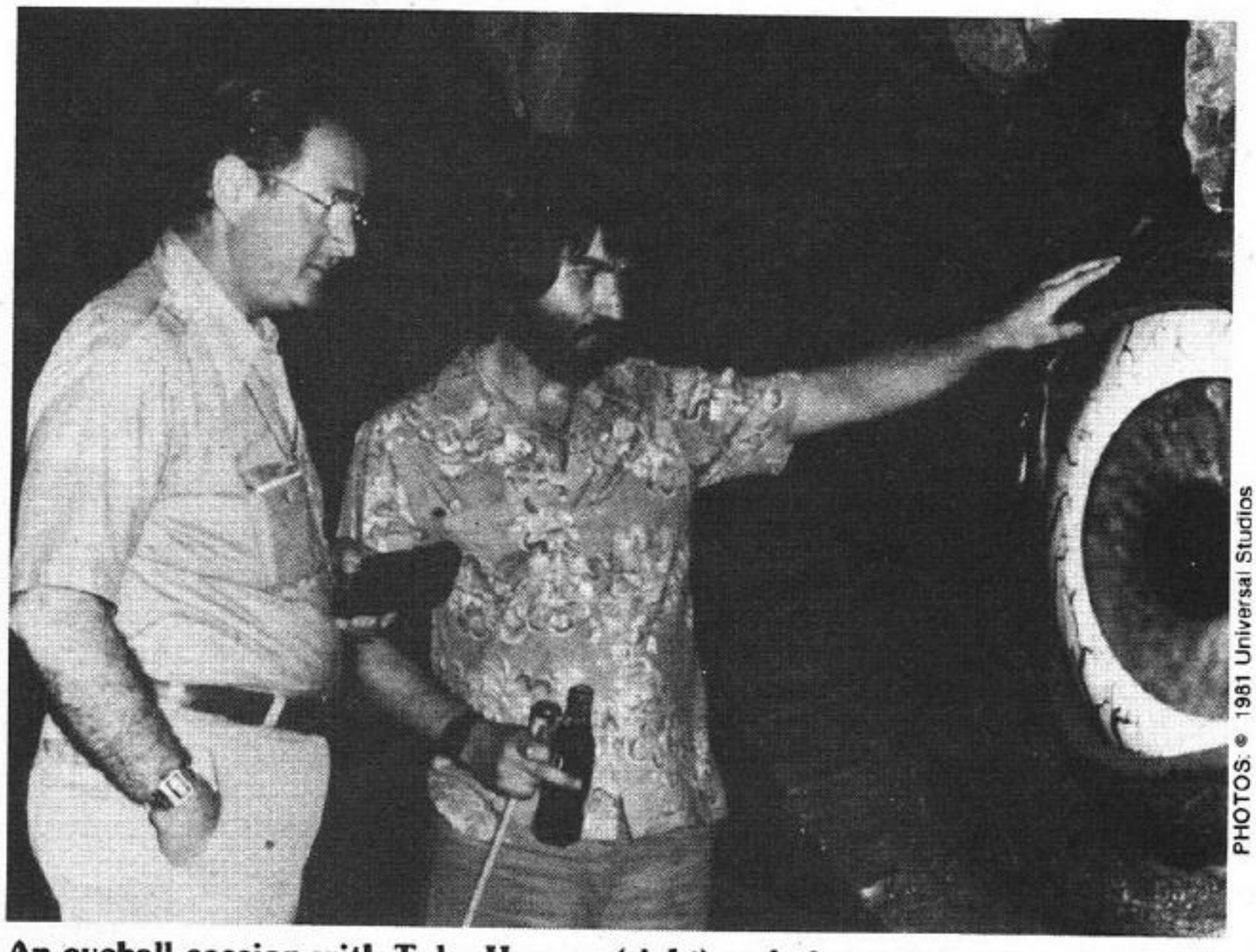
More recently, we heard from a Hooper associate that the writer-director was familiar with our magazine and suspected that he might actually enjoy being the subject of a FANGORIA interview. That was several months ago—it took a while for the stars to align themselves and allow the following interview to take place.

As we mentioned in issue #10, one delaying factor was an illness in Hooper's family which required that he leave the production of *Venom*, which was shooting at that time in England. We were quite relieved to learn that everything worked out fine—the entire Hooper family now feels quite well, thank you.

The interview itself was among the most enjoyable we've ever conducted; Hooper, to our surprise, seemed quite relaxed, and answed questions freely in a gentle-but-husky Texas drawl, that we found very similar to the voice of Ben Johnson, one of our favorite actors.

Hooper is used to surprising the people that he meets. "Everybody thinks I should be on a motorcycle with a skull and crossbones," he says. "Of course, I'm not at all like that. I've been accused of many things, and especially that—and of breaking up sets with my Hell's Angel friends. I don't even know what a Hell's Angel looks like! My whole bike experience is when I had a 200 cc Suzuki, a little dirt bike. I bought it new, put a couple hundred miles on it, and then left it set up 'til it froze. I'm not a Hell's Angel."

The real Tobe Hooper was born in Austin, Texas in 1946. Because his parents owned several hotels through the South, no particular town was home for long, as the Hooper family lived in whichever hotel required the most attention at any given time. The balance of the interview is presented verbatim:



PHOTOS: © 1981 Universal Studios

An eyeball session with Tobe Hooper (right) and cinematographer Andrew Laszlo on the set of *Funhouse*.

FANGORIA: Which were the first movies that you liked, as a youngster?

TOBE HOOPER: The very first ones? Oooh . . . that's not an easy one. When I was quite young, my first babysitter was a movie theater that my Dad owned, so I can't really say about my first impressions, because that all faded in, and became part of my reality and language. But, anyway, I liked things like *Scaramouche*, with Stewart Granger fencing and doing all kinds of business. I liked the spectacles and the de Mille things, and some wonderful black and white films that I recall featuring Zachary Scott . . . those are my first impressions.

FANG: When did you feel that you might make films?

HOOPER: I decided to do that when I got a little movie camera when I was nine or ten years old.

FANG: And you immediately started telling stories with your backyard films?

HOOPER: Actually, I was making them in the basement of the hotel. But I did start doing stories right away. I started doing Poe.

FANG: During Corman's Poe period?

HOOPER: Yes, it was—I was competing with Roger Corman with my own version of *House of Usher*.*

FANG: And your ambitions grew from there.

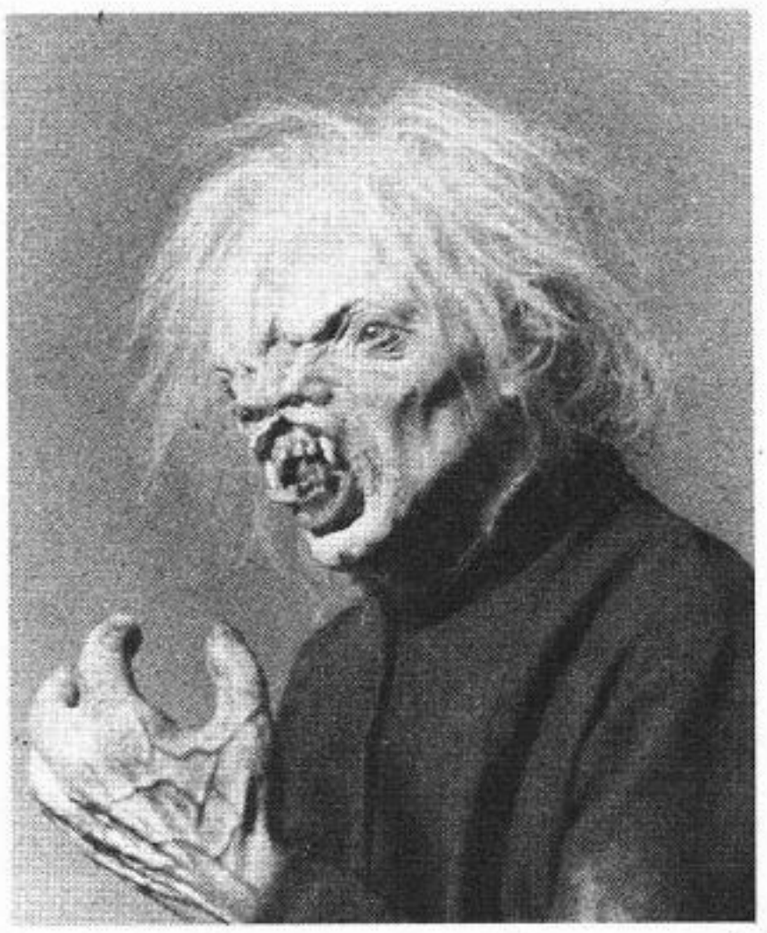
HOOPER: Right. I started renting professional lighting equipment to try to give my 8mm films that Hollywood look.** I came through camera, gaffing; I was an actor at one time, briefly, and I was quite fond of makeup for a while. Then music and editing. For a while I owned a little commercial film studio, owned it with a couple of other guys, and we turned it into quite a business. We made some films for PBS, and various educational programs and grants—this was under Lyndon Johnson's administration—but I guess I'm getting ahead of you now!

FANG: It doesn't sound like that—it seems to be a very logical progression—but was there any formal film school in there somewhere?

**mild chuckle*
***laughter*

HOOPER: No.
FANG: So you were given an 8 millimeter camera and, bit by bit, it grew into a 35! I suppose you came to know that you were heading for feature films
HOOPER: Oh, yes. I always wanted to make a feature. I started several features in 16 millimeter that didn't make it. Then I started making industrial films, TV spots, educational films and public service announcements. I finally put enough money together to make a short film called *The Heisters* which I shot in an anamorphic process called Techniscope [a relatively inexpensive wide-screen process, no longer in general use]. It was a comedy. But I just happened to hit the beginning of the time when short subjects were no longer in use in theaters; owners were paying $10 a week flat rental fee for really old material. The film received some favorable notice at festivals, and I got some intellectual satisfaction—but it didn't bring what I needed at that point in my career.
FANG: But you did eventually get to feature production.
HOOPER: Well, I did a feature-length film for the Public Broadcasting System called *Peter, Paul and Mary.*
FANG: What was that about?
HOOPER: Peter, Paul and Mary.
FANG: The group?
HOOPER: Yes, the group, At first I was commisioned to do a film about the world, about sharing, and about profound, wonderful things, with Peter Paul and Mary in the background. This was, of course, at their request. After I delivered the 3½ hour director's cut, they decided they wanted a picture about themselves; they wanted to be placed more in the foreground. I was able to do that—I had cut the film from several hundred hours of projection time. I had followed them on a cross-country tour with a cameraman, sometimes with three cameras. I remember being in the middle of a small riot on the first anniversary of Martin Luther King's death—and when you shake the camera, you get twice as much riot.

But I learned a *lot* on that film—they threatened to replace me; and I remember spending a lot of time walking around the piers in New York.
FANG: And your first theatrical release was *Texas Chainsaw*?
HOOPER: Before that was a film that received a very limited release, *Eggshells.* It was a very low budget film, maybe 40 or 60 thousand dollars. I shot it in 16, and blew it up to 35. I remember loading that 35 millimeter film-can into the trunk of my old MG, and thinking that it was quite an accomplishment. The 35mm can full of the feature symbolized something to me; I remember its weight, the heft of it . . .
FANG: And what was *Eggshells* about?
HOOPER: It's a film about the disintegration of the peace movement, toward the end of the Vietnamese war.
FANG: Really? . . . I'd be the last to say anything against *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, I think it's a marvelous film, but it

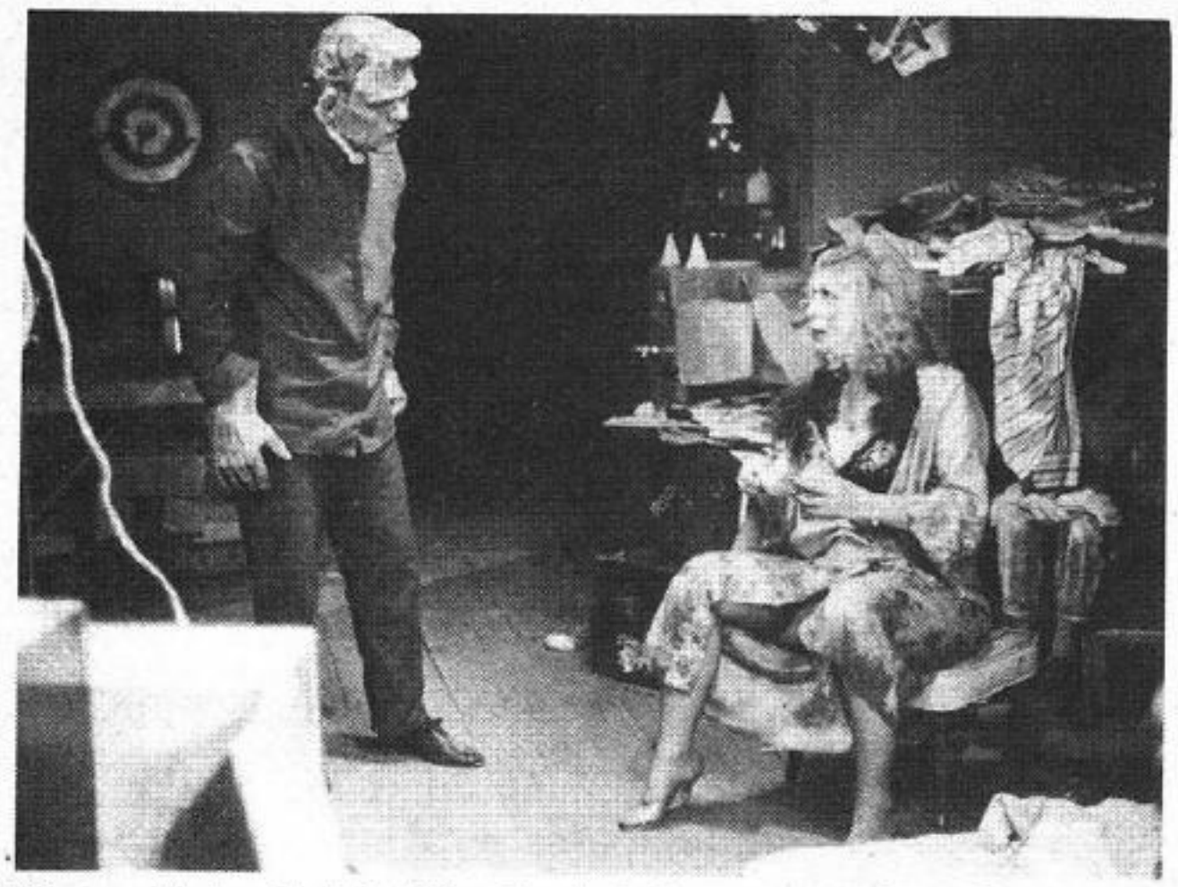


We didn't know we weren't supposed to publish this guy last issue—sorry!

seems a very unusual choice to make after *Eggshells* and *Peter, Paul and Mary*, and perhaps a choice that would keep you from making any wide variety of films.
HOOPER: Oh, yes—exactly. *Texas Chainsaw* was made before the genre was first-run, which it is now. These days it's totally respectable, which is wonderful, and quite as it should be. But at the time, for $155,000, it was the only logical move to make for feature director who had totally blown it on an art film and found that, without wide distribution, there is no future. So I set out to do *Chainsaw* very logically, with many things a part of the equation that led me to make that decision. But the equation also included survival, the ability to continue to work. It did tend to freeze me into a mold, it seems.
FANG: Did you have any difficulty in obtaining a release for *Texas Chainsaw*?
HOOPER: No, not at all. It was all like magic, as if I had done just the right thing. By the end of that year, it was at the Cannes Film Festival as an official U.S. entry.

It was taken to be a political piece there—of course, those were political times. The first screening, there was a bomb threat, and we had to evacuate the place. I spoke twice, and both times some guy would jump up, call me a fascist pig, and run out of the theater.
FANG: Were you surprised by its success?
HOOPER: I was surprised at that kind of success. Of course, I took the traditional financial screwing, but I had certainly not expected that the Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art would place it in their permanent collection as they did.
FANG: Were you surprised to learn which doors did or did not open after it reached that level of success?
HOOPER: Well, I stayed in Texas about a year longer than I should have. I'd been in the process of moving to L.A. over a period of 10 years, staying with friends for a few months at at time. So I don't think I was surprised by anything. I do think that I made some wrong moves, and didn't take some opportunities, which left me on the short side for a time later. My career planning didn't include the type of possibilities that finally came to be. I was really kind of unprepared for that, and there wasn't that fantastic a rush, anyway. My whole career seems to me to have been like a really very slow fade-in.
FANG: At least that sort of slow progress says that you've made it by ability, and not by some fluke.
HOOPER: That is one way to look at it.
FANG: Then there was *Eaten Alive.*
HOOPER: *That* was the mistake.
FANG: I've heard testimony on both sides of the case. I have to confess I've never seen it.
HOOPER: I'd be inclined to join the testimony on only one side. That film . . . that is *not my movie.* I was saddled with the rap for it. There are a few good moments in it that I don't mind admitting that I shot myself; but there were some things in there that were shot without me. In those days, I was a little uppity, and there were some things in it that I called "gratuitous nudity," which is what it truly was. It was so long ago that I don't have many feelings about it that remain very hot—except that they owe me money, but I'm used to that.

But the goddam thing about it is that some of it maybe does work, if you view it almost as a cartoon. I picked up a tape in England, where they were selling it at Harrad's, of all places, under its original title, *Deathtrap* [trivia fans—it was also released in some parts of the country as *Starlight Slaughter*]. Neville Brand did some very nice things for me in that picture, roaming about this old hotel and talking to himself. That part I'm really happy about. Neville is a wonderful actor. So when I looked at the tape, I saw it as the silly thing that it was supposed to be—and it's just too bad that this silliness had to be interrupted by these added pieces, that didn't do a damned thing for it.
FANG: I understand you were involved with *Funhouse* for quite a while before shooting actually started. How did that come about.
HOOPER: Before I started shooting and prepping *'Salem's Lot*, it was a script that just happened to come around to me enough times to get me totally involved with it. It started out to be a very low-budget picture, and developed into a project costing millions of dollars. I guess it was at least a year before I started really working on it.
FANG: I had the impression that you had signed to do it before *'Salem's Lot*, which I understand brought a lot more attention to you as a director than you were receiving just before. I was wondering whether, to some extent, you may have viewed *Funhouse* as an obligation.
HOOPER: In fact, I signed up for it after *'Salem's.* I had been involved with the property before that, but I didn't sign the contracts until later. At the time I had several options, things that I could do. *Fun-*



Wayne Doba, Sylvia Miles in a brief encounter from *Funhouse*.

PHOTO: © 1981 New Line Cinema

***Texas Chainsaw Massacre*: Gunnar Hansen as "Leatherface."**

house offered what seemed to be the right thing for the moment. I saw I'd be able to do more filmmaking and directing work with that property. It had a lot of room for interpretation—it's really a very kaleidoscopic piece, colorful, full of lights, with wide-screen and dolby—all of that. And Andy Laszlo's photography is wonderful.

FANG: I heard—everyone I spoke to for our coverage of the film praised his work very highly. Our next issue [when you read this, our last issue—#11], has your main creature on the cover. Universal accidentally sent it to us.

HOOPER: Is that right? I tried to hold all those photos!***

FANG: We had no idea that we weren't supposed to print it—it made a pretty neat cover, though. I should tell you before you see it, though, that we spoke to Craig Reardon, and he had some criticisms to make about the script, mainly concerning the blandness of the scenes set in the carnival, before the monster's appearance. What can you tell us about the development of the script?

HOOPER: It was Larry Block's original. The script was initially a very sketchy blueprint. That was good for me, and I think that what Craig didn't see is that this was the room for interpretation that I mentioned, that enabled me to build something colorful around it—a simple framework.

FANG: I suspected that might be the case. Craig did tell us that he hadn't been on the set during those scenes not involving the creature. I was wondering whether there was much improvisation during those scenes.

HOOPER: No, not a lot. Damn little. In fact, the shots were so hard to design, that a lot had to happen in the editing room. In a way, this script is a real distillation of the whole genre. It's about *carnival*, which is, in a way, the direction the whole field is leaning toward. So, within that, it let me do a lot of things—take dialogue and situations that seem less than brilliant on paper, and use them as part of the statement. The actor's parts become part of the overall image here, of film-as-carnival. The characters are predictable in a way, almost as if these kids are themselves straight out of a Corman film—but in a theatrical way, if you know what I mean.

FANG: Like a feature-length set-piece . . .

HOOPER: Yeh. (A little doubtfully)

FANG: . . . the film itself being the funhouse.

HOOPER: Yes.

FANG: You say that the shots were hard to block. Why?

HOOPER: We had this entire carnival on rent. The first two weeks of shooting, the set had not been properly wired, so I couldn't run the whole damn thing at once. Sometimes I would get coverage looking one way, then 2 weeks later we'd recable it, and I'd restage the situation for the reverses, so I could shoot back the other way. Five weeks into the shoot, we finally broke down and paid for the additional power, and cabled the whole damn place. It was really a logistical nightmare. Steve Bernhardt, the line producer, and Norman Cohen, my first assistant director, worked that out.

FANG: Once you'd transported this carnival from Akron, Ohio to Florida, what preparations were required before you could shoot?

HOOPER: Well, the production designer laid all the pieces of the carnival out; and behind the Ivan Tors studios in Miami, where we shot, we had to doze the area to build a backlot, and do a little resculpting of the land in several spots.

We had the carnival for maybe two weeks before it was all laid out, and I was shooting long before it was ready—though of course you don't see that. We just had to be very selective about our angles.

FANG: I understand you had to leave in order to meet other obligations before the final cut.

HOOPER: I worked on the cutting for at least three months before leaving. When I left for London, I missed one stage of production, but I came back and caught up with it. In between, it was just the things director delivers his cut, they're going to do their bit of business—that's all that happened.

FANG: There was something published elsewhere about a possible rock'n'roll soundtrack.

HOOPER: No . . . a fellow named John Beal delivered a fantastic soundtrack. It's conventional in that it's a 57-piece orchestration, but it is exceptional in its way, and quite good.

FANG: Carnival motifs?

HOOPER: Yes, and wonderful stuff with calliopes. In stereo, it's really marvelous.

FANG: As to the future—*Texas Chainsaw* did tend to cast you into a certain mold, but it, along with a couple of other films, created a trend that has brought you, like other directors in the field, enough attention that you might be able to use that success record to break out of the mold. Do you have any plans in that direction?

HOOPER: Well, I have a very definite plan to work again with Ken Henkel, associate producer and co-writer with me on *Texas Chainsaw*. There's not much more that I can say about it, except that it is more in the realm of pure fantasy.

FANG: Epic Fantasy, or storybook fantasy?

HOOPER: It's epic and storybook fantasy. It's the logical place to go—more than logical, it's fun. Fun for me, and I'm quite looking forward to it.

FANG: But before that happens, there's your current project, which we understand has Steven Spielberg as writer-producer *It's Night Time*. Can you tell us anything about that?

HOOPER: I can tell you that the title's been changed to *Poltergeist*, and that tells you a little bit more about the story. That's pretty much all I can say at this time.

FANG: Well I think I can speak for our readers when I say that we'll all be looking forward to it.

****much good-natured laughter*

Editor's Note: Of course there's much more to be said about Texas Chainsaw Massacre *and* 'Salem's Lot *than appears in this interview. Tobe Hooper tells us that he did, indeed, enjoy speaking with us, and invited us to call again soon. You better believe we will!*

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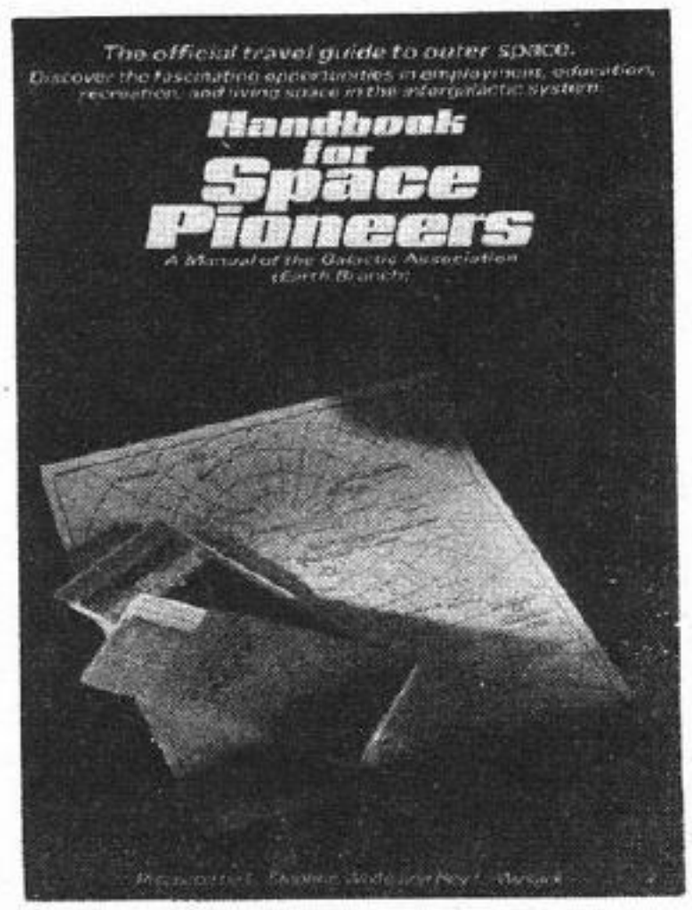

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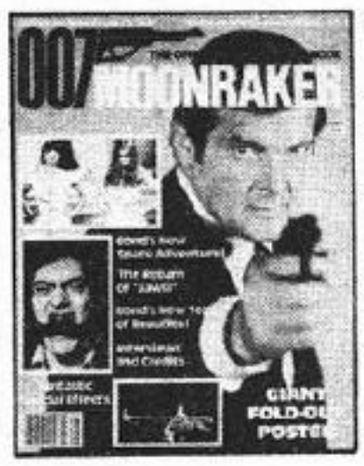

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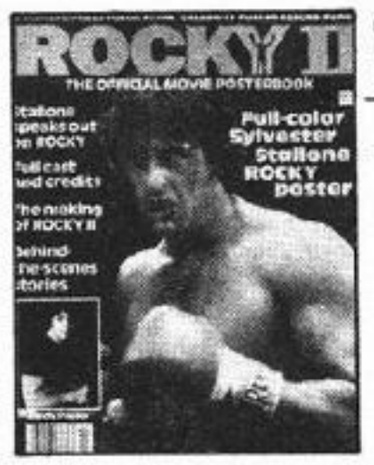

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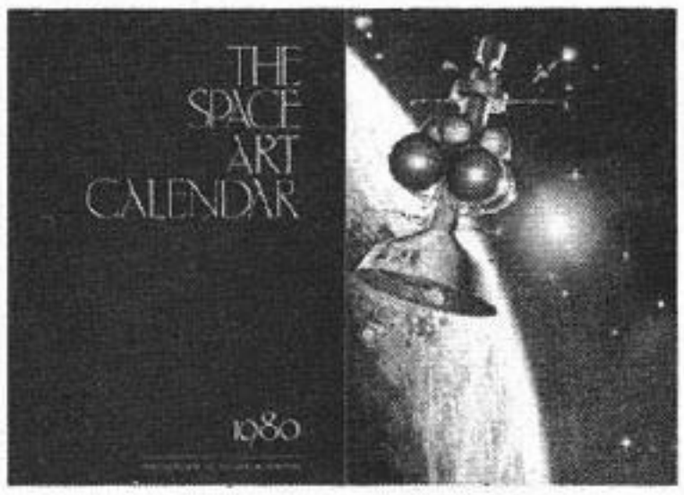

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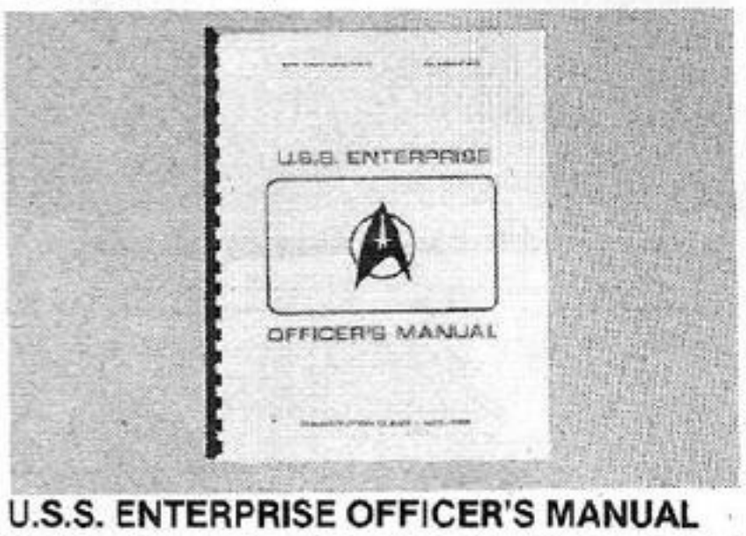

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#7 - Caroline MUNRO & Tom SAVINI— **MANIAC!**; Chris WALAS and **GALAXINA**; **THE SHINING** Preview; PRICE, Pt. 2; Disney's **WATCHER IN THE WOODS**; HITCHCOCK, Pt. 1; Animator Chuck JONES; A Great Deal More!

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The Hand

(continued from page 11)

went through crew, casting, rehearsals—everything was done; we'd picked the locations and were set to start in six days when there was a hitch in the financing. It was cofinanced by a German group, and they didn't come through. Then Al Pacino, who would've got an Academy Award for this one, got cold feet and walked away."

Another Vietnam script, an original titled *The Platoon*, led directly to Stone's *Midnight Express* assignment. Producer Martin Bregman optioned it for possible development, at Columbia Studios. Columbia liked it, but didn't want to compete with *Apocalypse Now*, which was in production at the time. Instead, they asked the young screenwriter to try his hand at an adaptation of *Midnight Express*, a film that proved the talents of a relatively unknown director, Alan Parker, as well as those of Oliver Stone.

"So I became the next highly-touted screenwriter," says Stone, "Making my 'directorial debut' as a trade-off for my writing."

Ten years after the fiasco of his first directorial effort, now with an Oscar and a $6.5 million budget to live up to, Stone admits that he found filming *The Hand* a more difficult task than he'd expected, one of the chief problems being the hand itself.

"It's such a small thing; it doesn't have the inherent power of a King Kong or a Jaws. It's all a question of perspective when you want to make it look powerful or menacing. Out of a 70-80 day shooting, we spent maybe 20 days working on the hand. We took extra care to see that those shots came out well."

The mechanical hands used for the picture were primarily the work of Carlo Rambaldi. While the film was in midproduction, a rumor was circulating in special effects circles that, of eight mechanized hands created ty the Italian effects technician, four had failed to work, and that a mad scramble was made while filming was in progress to recruit the talent to fix Rambaldi's work. According to Stone, however, there were few, if any, problems with the mechanics of the hands; it was their surface appearance that required outside help.

"I guess we pulled a coup," says Stone, "in that we recruited both Stan Winston and Tom Burman to do some additional makeup work. Carlo worked like a dog on this picture. You've got to realize how difficult it is to build a mechanical hand—it's so small, so you've got relatively little space to work in, compared to a shark or an ape. He worked so hard and long on those mechanicals, that he let the makeup go a bit.

"There were problems, but effects is a field of problems. It's hard for me to evaluate the level of success we achieved, as I haven't done many effects films. I heard that *Jaws* went back to shoot the effects three times from scratch. We went back and reshot a few things, but not to any unusual extent.

"I'm very happy with Carlo's work; I'd say he delivered 80% of what we wanted, which is a very high figure."

If Stone is happy with Rambaldi, you might say he's absolutely joyous over the contribution of actor Michael Caine. "He was wholly delightful," he says. "Truly one of the sweetest easiest actors to work with, always on time, always concerned and caring about his role. He was always willing to rehearse, and ready for as many takes as you might want. And he acted as a very stabilizing influence on the other cast members as well.

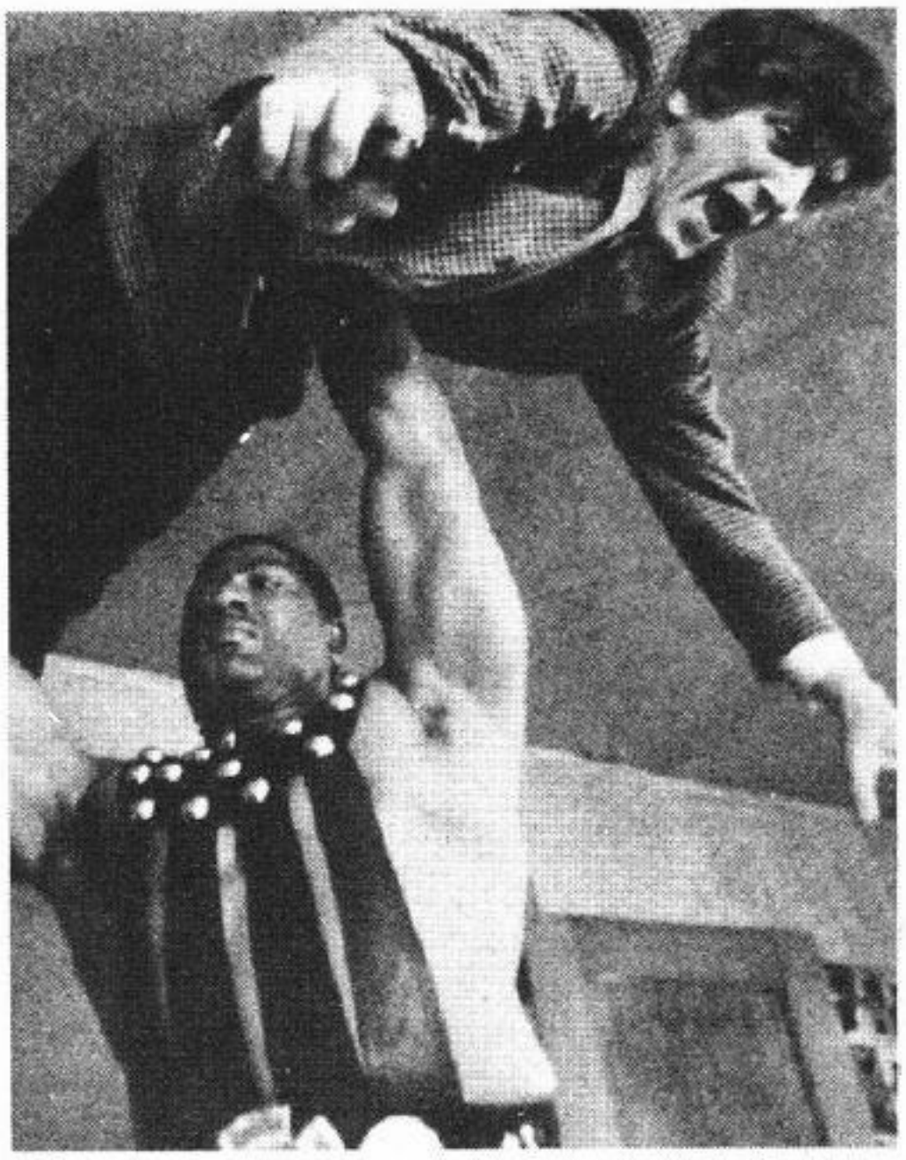
"His was a very dark role, that of a man who eventually becomes psychotic. In casting the role, we wanted to stay away from the type of actor that you might suspect from the beginning was about to go crazy. We wanted to go with an outwardly healthy, normal family man—not a Peter O'Toole or a Jack Nicholson, who look like they're totally disturbed. Michael always struck me as very upbeat, with a light, very witty quality."

The role of Anna Lonsdale, Caine's discontented wife, was assigned to Andrea Marcovicci, an exotic beauty best remembered for her featured roles in Martin Ritt's *The Front* and *Airport '79*. "She has a quality that is something like the young Eliza-

PHOTOS: © 1981 Orion Pictures

Anne (Andrea Marcovicci) inspects her husband's work in one of the quieter scenes.

A mechanical prosthetic hand becomes a weapon for Lansdale as he vents his rage.



PHOTOS: © 1981 Cinerama Releasing

Jonathan Frid is a victim of his nightmares (including Martine Beswicke, left) in Stone's earlier feature, *Seizure*.

PHOTO: © 1981 Orion Pictures

Viveca Lindfors appears as a doctor studying Caine's strange state of mind.

beth Taylor," says Stone, "and a steely, sort of waspish bitchiness that the part required."

Stone was also responsible for the choice of Barry Windsor Smith as a production artist. Smith completed some storyboards for the film, and produced the art that is represented in the film as that of John Lonsdale. "I'd always been a fan of his," Stone confesses. "I think I fell in love with his version of Conan before I had even read the Howard books. He did more for that comic than anyone, and I still think it's a shame they let John Bucsema in; his art in that book has been terrible.

"Since the cartoonist was drawing a Conan-type character, Barry was the logical choice. Oddly enough, Barry was English, as was Michael, and they both have sandy blond hair. When they first met, they discovered that they're both about 6'2", and that they both have the same sort of East End wit. The similarity was quite amazing."

Unfortunately, Smith's art for the picture disappeared from the studio set at an amazing rate, no doubt due to the value placed on his work by comic art collectors. And, since Stone is in the process of moving to a new home, the film art that he was able to salvage, and Smith's storyboards, are currently in storage. So don't write in and ask us why we didn't show you the artwork!

While on the subject of Cimmerians, we spoke briefly with Stone on the subject of his involvement with the Dino de Laurentis project to put *Conan* on the big screen. "When I was asked to write the script I was given a pretty free hand," Stone says, "Because the budget had not yet been finally determined. I delivered a script that would have taken perhaps $50 million to make. When John Milius was assigned as director, the budget had come down to about $15 million. So he had to rewrite the script to accommodate that budget, taking out much of the sorcery. John Milius is a friend of mine, and I have a lot of respect for his ability; I expect he'll make quite a good picture."

Stone has no immediate "next picture" plans. "I'm pretty exhausted right now," he says "and won't be in any rush to get something else until I've fulfilled my screenplay obligations." Those obligations include *Wilderness*, described by Stone as "a *Deliverance* sort of story set in the woods of Maine, which I might possibly wind up directing," and a screen adaptation of Alfred Bester's classic *The Demolished Man*. The latter will be directed by Ted Kotcheff, who is currently at work on *Captured*, the story of a young man's involvement with a bizarre religious sect. Kotcheff is expected to enter preproduction work on the tale of mind police and psychic brainwashing sometime later this year.

More than anything, Stone would still like to translate his war experience into a truthful film about Vietnam. "I still can't quite understand why this is the only war that has been continually lied about," he says. "Truthful films have been made about World War II, and about Korea. I've written five different scripts on it at different times." While options were taken on a few of these, none of them have reached the shooting stage, and, considering the national mood in the post-hostage era, it seems unlikely that any Hollywood studio would soon underwrite a reminder of that earlier national tragedy.

But Stone does have alternate plans in the works. "*At Play in the Fields of the Lord* is quite a beautiful book, set in the South American jungle, and I've thought of doing that. I just came back from Ecuador, where I was researching the cocaine trails for the treatment of *Inside the Cocaine Wars*, a book by Rod Thorpe, which Universal would develop for me if I chose to go ahead. But it's very dangerous down there—we had a couple of very close calls. But I am fascinated by that subject."

Coming away from an interview with Oliver Stone, one can't help but feel that his most productive period, as screenwriter and director, is just ahead of him. His first major screen credit, after years of struggle, earned him Hollywood's highest honor, the Oscar; and yet he still has a store of anger at "the system" that provides a fuel for his creative energy. No matter where he directs that energy, it seems likely to result in some very provocative filmmaking.

Inseminoid

Out in space, explorers find new meanings to the words alien and mother!

By ED NAHA

In space, no one gets a Mother s Day card . . . not even perky astronaut Sandy (Judy Geeson) who, as the main character in the new science fiction thriller *Inseminoid*, certainly could use one. Directed by Norman J. Warren (*Prey, Terror* and *Satan's Slaves*) and produced by Richard Gordon (*Fiend Without A Face, The Haunted Strangler, The Projected Man* and *Island of Terror*) and David Speechley (*Yessongs*), *Inseminoid* is a film concerning the problems of unplanned parenthood of the alien kind.

When the Space Explorer *Xeno* drops off a small archaeological expedition on a remote planet to investigate an ancient alien civilization, they assume that its citizenry is long dead. The assumption is not exactly on the button, as the dozen chagrined astronauts discover once they're on the planet's surface.

Discovering a mysterious tomb, untouched for millenia, crewmembers Dean and Ricky (Dominic Jephcott and David Baxt) stumble upon a pile of strange, glowing crystals. Inside one of the crystals, something seems to be . . . moving. The two explorers try to photograph the phenomenon, but when their shutter goes click the crystals go boom.

Dean dies in the outer space explosion and Ricky, badly injured, is taken to the expedition's temporary headquarters: a series of underground tunnels. Clutched in Ricky's hand is the pulsating crystal. The commander of the expedition, Holly (Jennifer Ashley) decides that, perhaps, humans don't really belong on this alien terrain. She terminates the mission and announces that, when the *Xeno* completes its solar orbit and passes over their base in 72 hours, the archaeological team will make for space with haste.

Ricky, however, begins to mutate into a fairly ugly fellow and, breaking out of the makeshift hospital, heads back for the tomb. He and a crewmember die in a scuffle. Intrigued, the rest of the expedition decides to investigate the power of the tomb. One of the party, Sandy, is kidnapped by a strange shadowshape and, from that point onward, it's not much of a party for anyone involved.

Sandy is raped by an alien thug, and is inseminated with the seed of the alien civilization. Found in a state of deep shock by her peers, Sandy is returned to the comparative safety of the bunker, where her hazy recollections of her alien encounter give way to inexplicable and violent fits. Just about the same time as her fellow humans discover that Sandy is pregnant, a violent explosion emerges from within the nearby tomb; destroying the last traces of the alien culture and its last big daddy.

As the minutes and hours tick by, Sandy begins to mutate; becoming a fairly homicidal humanoid creature. For sport, she begins stalking her hapless spacemates through the alien planet's eerie labyrinthine inner core. She lusts for human blood, the perfect pick-me-up for her ever-growing alien fetus.

With the astronauts being murdered one by one, the few remaining humans theorize that they are up against the ultimate alien horror. Wrong. Before long, Sandy gives birth to a pair of alien twins and these deep space cousins of Hans and Fritz love human flesh even more than their mom. With babies making three, the stage is set for a fight to the finish between the SF equivelent of the nuclear family and the few human survivors (who'd love to nuke said family if they could only reach their abandoned cache of weapons located in an enemy-occupied tunnel).

Filmed twelve miles from London almost entirely underground at the ancient Chislehurst Caves, *Inseminoid* is a murderer-on-the-loose tale embellished with science fiction overtones. "That's the aspect which first attracted me to the script," says veteran horror/science fiction producer Richard Gordon. "Norman Warren was sent the script by Nick and Gloria Maley. He, in turn, sent it to me. I loved it.

"The script was written to showcase the talents of the Maleys: two special effects artists who have worked on films such as *Star Wars* and *The Empire Strikes Back*. They brought it to Norman because he has a knack of being able to direct low budget, exploitation pictures effectively and have great financial success.

"The film seemed a natural for me. All the films I've made, I've made in Englahd. The Maleys are headquartered in England and so is Norman."

Raising financing in England, Gordon and the *Inseminoid* creative crew decided to take a somewhat daring approach for a science fiction film and shoot the entire film, which takes place on an alien planet, on *location* at Chislehurst.

"We knew from the beginning," says Gordon, "that there was no way we could compete with films like *Star Wars* in terms of special effects. The emphasis in our movie was to be on the horrific elements; the makeup as opposed to the electrical gadgetry. The nature of the story required a minimum amount of exterior shooting; mainly dealing with the goings on within the alien caverns. So, we decided to build the sets we needed on location rather than a studio in order to get a more atmospheric, realistic touch.

"Chiselhurst caves is a well known tourist attraction. They're man-made caves that were built back in the time of the Romans. (*Ed. note:* The caves have been used by everyone from Druids to modern day British citizens. During World War II, Londoners used the caves as shelter during the blitz.) They don't go too far under the ground, consisting of a maze of tunnels that stretch some 21 miles throughout Kent.

"We decided that the caves would be perfect for our alien terrain; both artistically and economically. Their useage did turn out to be somewhat difficult and uncomfortable, however. Apart from an emergency exit somewhere, there's only one entranceway/exit to the caves. The tunnels are rather narrow and we had quite a time of dragging all our equipment in through there. We also had miles of

Opposite top: the alien baby snacks on an astronaut; center left has the astronauts trying to survive an attack as the alient hunts them on right. Judy Geeson is the unlucky astronaut to come upon the alien on the bottom left, and on the right she is forced to feast on her companions to feed her unborn, alien children.

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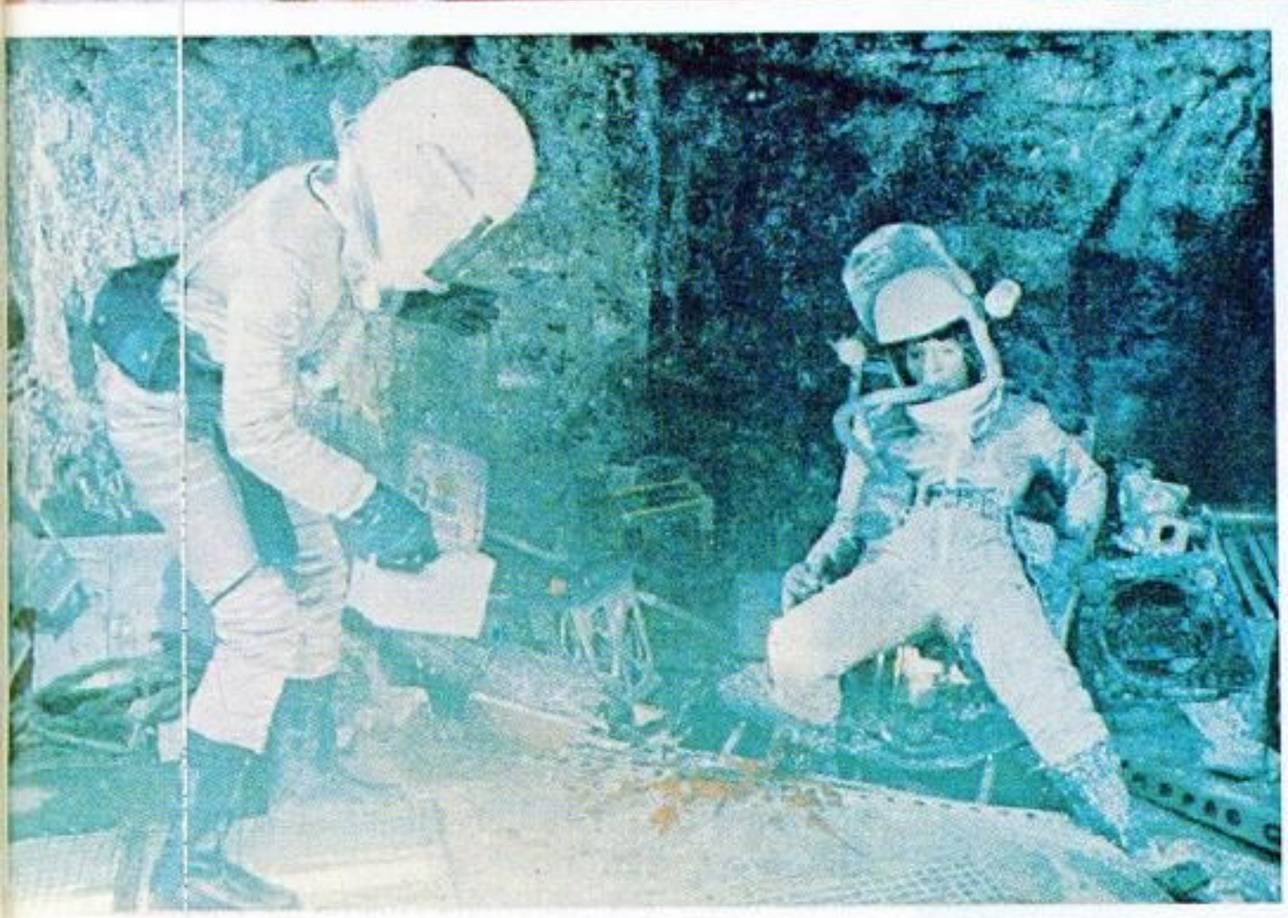
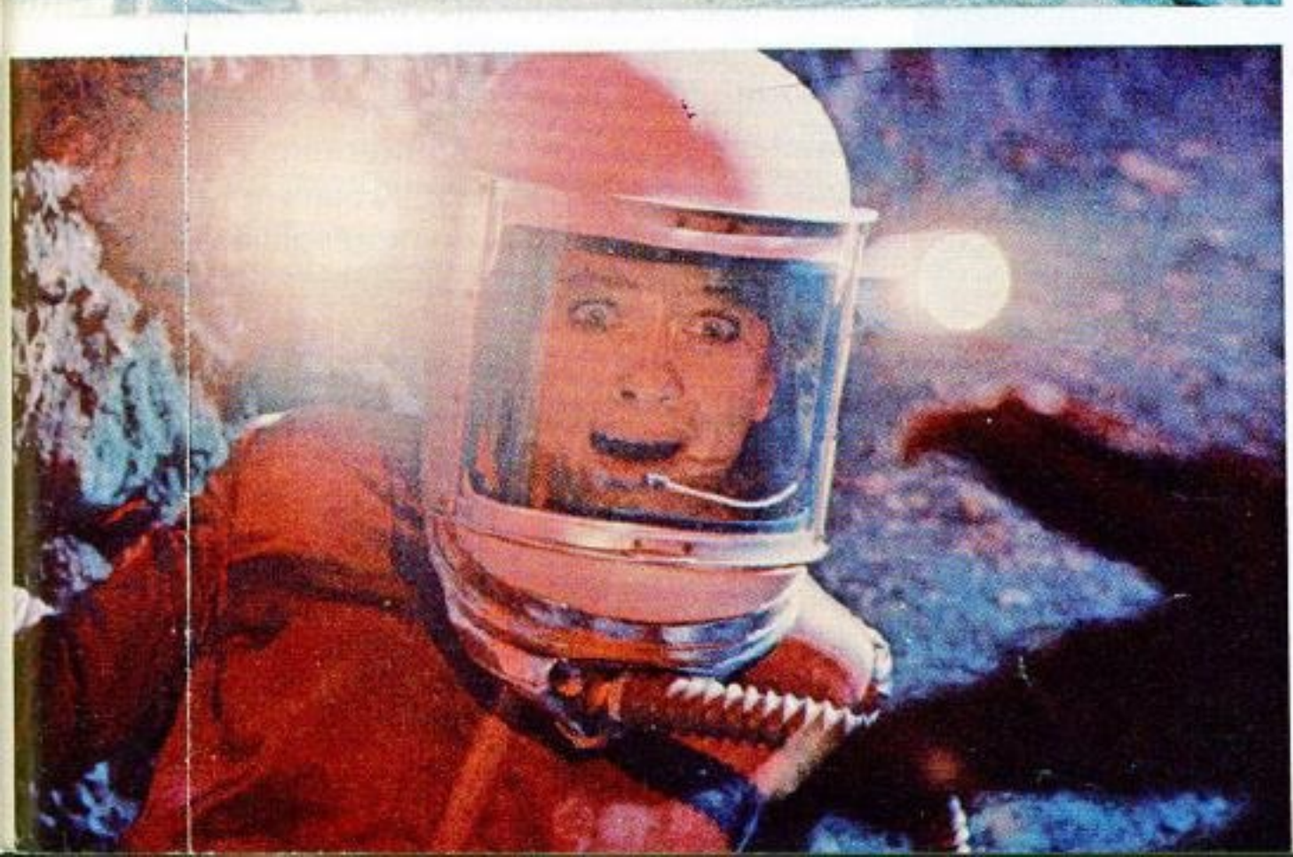




cable running all throughout this place. It got a bit cramped. The floors are quite uneven, too.

"On the other hand, the caves gave us some production values that we never could have gotten in a studio, particularly in terms of distance. During a chase scene, for instance, we could see the tunnels stretching for miles, twisting and turning. To duplicate that in a studio, we would have had to use someplace as big as Pinewood, coming up with sets as big as the famous 007 submarine base. We couldn't have afforded that.

"We shot three weeks in the caves, six days a week. We ran into a great deal of unexpected tension on the set. It seems that people kept underground for long periods of time get a bit edgy. If I had to sum up the atmosphere on this picture, I'd say it was similar to what you'd find while working in a coal mine.

"We also had small problems with our electricity. There were times when it would simply disappear. There was also some trouble with the atmospheric conditions in the caves because of the low level of temperature. It did extraordinary things to people's hairstyles. Then, when it rained outside, the cave walls would become very damp. The caves are made of chalk and chalk is pourous, so we had to constantly touch up our man-made sets and make repairs. We couldn't have our alien planet sweat and wilt. It was a fairly difficult movie to stage down there. Fortunately we got through it well."

The strange atmospheric conditions in the caverns, made some of the more gruesome makeup effects difficult to pull off, but since Nick Maley was handling both makeup and special effects, he was on call to keep the gore running. During the course of the film, humans are gutted, munched, punched, sliced and very nearly diced.

Although not a specialist in gore, Maley does have a great knack for credible terror effects. For the film *Absolution* he had to create a head which was required not only to be beaten with a shovel but to cut and bleed wherever struck, exposing mashed flesh and splintered skull. For *Satan's Slaves*, an effect which involved an actress being tacked to a door with a kitchen knife through her mouth so impressed the British Censor that he refused public permission for the scene to be shown.

For *Inseminoid* Maley worked hardest on a decompression death and the scene wherein the twins are seen slithering from the womb of their earthborn mama. In constructing the baby aliens, Maley relied heavily on his experience in previous films. An assistant to Stuart Freeborn in the manufacture of Chewbacca's mechanical face mask for *Star Wars*, one of the artists who worked on controlling Yoda in *The Empire Strikes Back* and a miniature model maker on *Superman—The Movie*, Maley designed his gruesome twosome along Yoda-esque lines.

"The babies are mechanically operated," says Gordon. "A combination of different tecniques which Nick and Gloria have devised to move all the parts realistically. Wires run from within the models to out of camera range. We had different people off screen operating different parts of the body. Three people worked simultaneously on each model in order to move the lips and teeth and eyes.

"The large alien is a combination of a large suit and additional makeup embellishments."

Gordon, at this point, believes that *Inseminoid*, despite its low budget, will attract a big audience because of its suspense and action angles. "It's the horrific aspect of the film that I find appealing," he says. "Let's face it. If you're going to make purely a science fiction picture you reallly have to go in for more elaborate special effects and a different type of story. I see this as a horror or terror film set against a science fiction background.

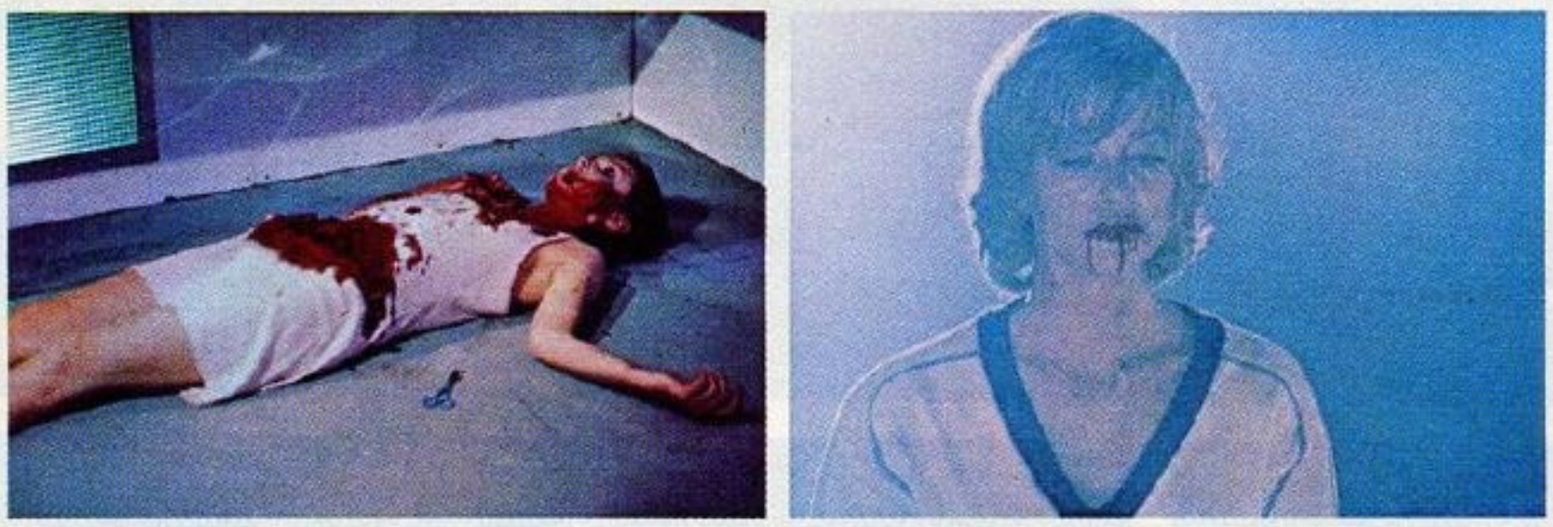
"I think we managed to do quite a bit on the money we had ($2 million). The alien creatures are incredibly lifelike. They look animated, although they're electrically controlled. (*Ed. note:* According to Maley, they're worked via air pressure.)

"I'd like to see this picture recognized as a well-made picture that entertains everybody. It's a picture that looks considerably bigger, in terms of production values and effects, than this sort of budget usually warrants."

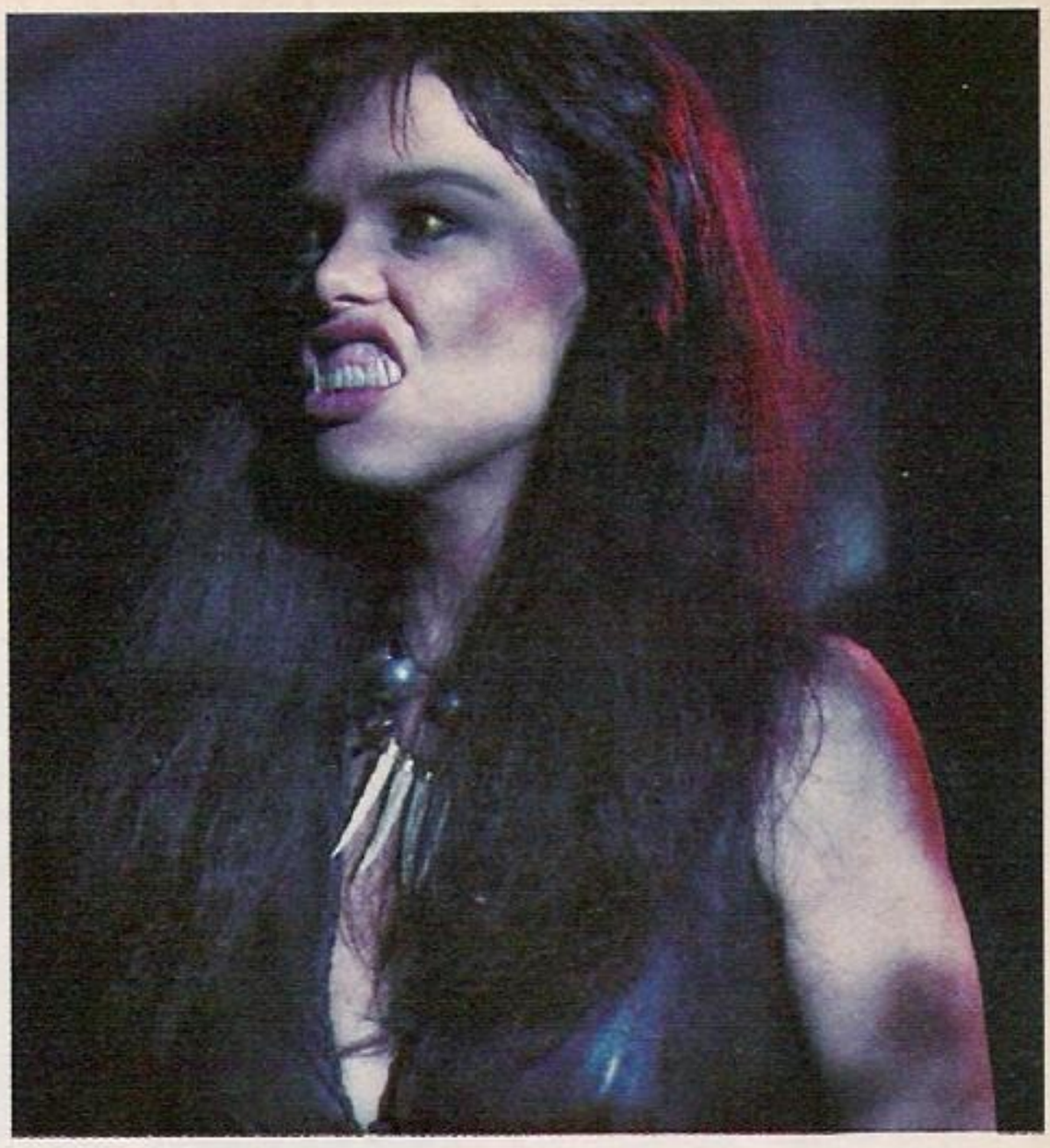
And what if the critics aren't as impressed with the film's carnivorous critters as the producer is? "Reviews don't matter with a movie like *Inseminoid*, Gordon smiles. "Audiences will go anyway, attributing the bad notices to intellectual critics who aren't in tune with current tastes."

And taste is what *Inseminoid* is all about . . . in one form or another.

Jennifer Ashley tries to comfort Judy Geeson after she has been found by the astronauts. Geeson, raped by an alien, is found to be pregnant.



Geeson (top right) gathers nourishment for her unborn child from the blood of her crewmates; bottom right, the birth.



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FANGORIA'S Fantasy Femme Fatale series
begins with The Howling's *leading werewolf*

Elisabeth Brooks

By ROBERT GREENBERGER

There is a vicious slasher roaming the streets of Los Angeles at night. There have been six victims so far and the police are stumped. Then, television anchorwoman Karen White (Dee Wallace) begins to receive phone calls from the slasher.

Eddie, the slasher, arranges to meet with Karen so he can explain about himself and why the people died. What Eddie (Robert Picardo) doesn't know is that Karen has been cooperating with the police. Her every move is followed and recorded.

Karen enters the seamy Los Angeles red light district and finds the appropriate pornographic book store. Scaring the patrons away by just walking in, Karen proceeds to the small film booths in the back. There she finds Eddie lurking within one of the small, confining booths. As a film plays, Eddie begins to tell the shaking Karen how she was different from the rest of the world and he wants her to join him. As he tells her to turn and face him for the first time, Karen screams.

Policemen rush to her aid and fire upon the unseen Eddie and he dies quickly. Karen, splattered with blood and crying, wanders out of the store in a daze, telling her husband Bill (Christopher Stone) she didn't see a thing.

She can't sleep, finds herself unable to make love and is troubled by a recurring nightmare of the events. Ready to make her first newscast with an eyewitness account of the incident, she freezes before the camera's open eye and breaks down.

Renowned psychologist Dr. George Waggner (Patrick MacNee) suggests that Karen and Bill go up to The Colony, an experimental hideaway where people work with group and individual therapy to overcome their problems in a tranquil setting. Agreeing, the couple travels to the wooded Colony, leaving co-workers Chris and Terry (Dennis Dugan and Belinda Balaski) to further investigate the strange case of Eddie Quist.

Once at The Colony, Karen continues to feel uneasy, especially with old Erle (John Carradine) and the mysterious Marsha (Elisabeth Brooks).

Cold yellow eyes look around the surroundings. She sees a new man at The Colony and saunters by him. She approaches him quietly, like a cat. The man explains he is looking for his wife; with a smoldering glance and a husky voice she asks, "Why?"

Brooks shows you two sides of Marsha Quist, *The Howling*'s wolfen seductress: left shows her alluring qualities, right her primal side.

And so begins Avco Embassy's *The Howling*, a tale mixing classic horror with good humor. Something is afoot at The Colony, something strange and terrifying to Karen and mysteriously alluring to Bill. And there is something definitely *strange* about Eddie, who seems preoccupied with werewolves and murder.

There is also the sultry Marsha Quist (known in the novel as Marcia Luria). Her introduction serves as an introduction for Elisabeth Brooks into the world of horror. As the primal seductress and pivotal character, Brooks is given a chance to display her abilities after making the rounds of television and soap operas.

In conversation with Brooks, FANGORIA learned a bit more about her diverse background. Born in Canada, she was brought to the United States when she was only five months old. When she did her first play at the tender age of five years old, she decided right then and there that she wanted to be an actress.

"I love to pretend to be somebody else," she says by phone. "I like to take a different viewpoint from my own as far as life situations go, and being another person allows me the opportunity to search out another person's way of thinking, which opens my own way of thinking. I'm not so close-minded when I deal with situations."

"And in being an animal, she has no compassion or desire to be associated with human beings. She has very definite points of view on the human race . . . she finds them threatening . . ."

For nine months, Brooks lived in New York and played an ex-alcoholic country singer on the soap opera, *Days of Our Lives*. It also brought Brooks her first fan mail. "She was kind of a spaced-out character," Brooks says with a laugh. "She wasn't too sure what was wrong, what was right and what she was going to do next. She ran off to be a rock and roll star." It was on that show that Brooks began singing, and writing her own music and lyrics. "During the show I opened my own publishing company and I did a couple of my songs on the show. The part I played was not a good singer and so it was easy," she chuckles. She is now taking lessons and is planning on performing when ready.

After leaving the world of soap, Brooks went to Los Angeles and found herself doing a lot of television appearances. She has appeared on shows like *Starsky and Hutch* and made the telefilm *Heart to Heart*. Brooks also made the rounds at Universal Studios, appearing on *The Rockford Files, The Six Million Dollar Man, The Bionic Woman* and even *The Night Stalker*. She played a nurse's aide on the episode, "The Spanish Moss Murders."

She tells of her first role in a Universal movie: a small bit in Alfred Hitchcock's *Family Plot*. "I had a very small part," she admits, "and when I first got on the set, I overheard the make-up man and wardrobe people and crew talking about how he [Hitchcock] had not talked to anyone in two weeks. He just wasn't a friendly person to the crew. He wasn't rude to them, he just didn't talk to them. He didn t spend much time talking to anyone. He didn't care to get into conversations with actors so he had an Assistant Director give all the directions.

"When I started to do my two lines, he sent the AD over to the guy I was working with to give him some directions and the AD came to me and said, 'Mr. Hitchcock suggests...' and way in the corner I hear this booming voice saying, 'Young lady...' and he started talking to me and I got very nervous and I was the talk of the set because I was the first actress he had directed on the film directly. I felt really impressed.

"And of course the first few times I screwed up. I got him to laugh. I was very nervous and I dropped my purse right in the middle of everything and he started laughing and I said, 'I'm sorry...' and he said, 'That's all right, that's all right.' This was just a small start."

Brooks had never heard of the novel, *The Howling*, but she received a call at home, telling her Avco Embassy was making the movie and they wanted her to come in and read for a part. "I went in and I was given a script and I read it and came back. I did a scene for the producer, Mike Finnell, and the director, Joe Dante, and came back again and did another scene, or the same scene for the executive producers, Daniel Blatt and Steven Lane. And then I had to come back with a long, dark wig on." Brooks was wearing short, blondish hair at the time.

Marsha is described in the film as "elemental" with vast untapped powers. She's also a seductress, who has little use for men and even less use for women. She's accused of taking men and bending them to her will for whatever purpose she chooses and no one can understand her motives.

"I was told not to read the novel," Brooks explains. Marsha may be one of the few elements to remain similar to the book's depiction. Marsha Quist is also the toughest role Brooks has undertaken. She describes Marsha as an animal. "And in being an animal, she has no compassion or desire to be associated with human beings. She has very definite points of view on the human race and being an animal, she finds them extremely threatening to her unless she can control them. And she does control the humans." To her, it was an extremely challenging role and she feels she accomplished what she set out to do: create a complex character and make her believeable.

What disappoints her is the final cut of the film. She describes working with Director Dante as being very easy. "We really didn't have any trouble until I saw the film—and then we really didn't have any trouble. I had a meeting with him to voice my complaints, I felt he didn't leave enough substance to my character. He just centered on the sexually stimulating parts of her which are fine. Those are just actor's and director's opinions. He had to make his movie work. That's the way he said he could make the movie work. I am upset as an actress because I worked very hard on developing a character that I spent a lot of time and energy trying to develop. It's a little disheartening when you work so hard on something and you see so little of it up there except something that you were told wouldn't be the substance of the character and all of a sudden *that's* the substance and everything else you worked on isn't there anymore. I know how much was not left in and I'm a little upset but it's ok," she says.

"For Marsha," Brooks continues after taking a breath, "I was told to think of a cat. A very sexual, soft and feminine cat but very dignified. The type of thing a cat is. A cat gets it victims through sex—they have a very sexual outlook. I think a lot of that was left out of the film. A lot of the power was left out. The power that was left in was sexual power. So that's ok. Joe and I had many talks about it but by the time I found out about the cuts, it was too late to go back and change anything."

Part of the sexual nature of Marsha is also very visual since Brooks had to do a scene with full frontal nudity. "It was freezing," she remembers. "It was done very late at night and it was extremely cold. We did it very quickly. It was my first such experience and hopefully one of my last."

What made the love scene so difficult was not just the cold. Both Brooks and Christopher Stone had to go through partial transformation into werewolves while supposedly making love. Both wore fangs in their mouths that slid into place when wires were tripped with their tongues.

Thinking about Marsha, the young actress goes on to discuss her, "In the film and the character and the script I read, my character had a lot of substance and credibility to it. And this person I played had a lot of dimension that in the actual cut of the film, I feel, has been diminished. I think *The Howling* is a cartoon brought to life. In looking at it as a cartoon, my character is a cartoon character, totally different from me as a person. I think it will be a very, very big hit.

"It is fun and it doesn't gross you out. They didn't put a lot of traditional horror elements in it, yet it encompasses all of it. I've heard it's almost a classic type of film. I think it will reach for more than the horror audience. Everyone has a good time."

To make Marsha come alive, and turn into a carnal werewolf, Rob Bottin worked with her. Brooks says of him, "He's a sweetheart, really easy to work with. They put a mask on my face when I turn into a werewolf. My face gets all distorted. They put a plaster cast over your whole face and it's a total freak-out, totally blows you away because you can't breathe. The whole time I was there, knowing Rob was there . . . he never stops talking, never. He has a soothing voice and you get comfortable and you don't get scared. Anytime I started to get scared, he would sense it and he'd say, 'It's ok Elisabeth, sit still . . .' He explains every step that he is doing so you know what's going on. He's fabulous to work with and he's like that with everyone."

Marsha makes such an impression on people that Brooks will be remembered by the audience. This puts her, in many people's eyes, as the new Barbara Steele of

(continued on page 62)

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Horror in the Comics

Part One

Beginning with this issue, a new series looking at the weird, occult and horror, as portrayed in the comics!

By RON GOULART

Although it wasn't until the early 1950s that most psychologists, congressmen and parents came to realize that comic books were offering some pretty gruesome stuff to the innocent young readers of the nation, there had been horror and assorted weird material available in comic books from their start two decades earlier. In this series we'll trace the development of this macabre category from the hole in the wall days of the Thirties to the big business era of the Fifties. Covering an occult investigator created by the fellows who gave you Superman, observing the early Batman as he confronts vampires and chronicaling the careers of comic book werewolves, zombies, monsters, Satanic emissaries, ghosts, fiends and sundry other wretched cratures. All of whom came to the readers of the period in glowing color, costing just one thin dime per dose.

In 1935 Major Malcolm Wheeler-Nicholson, former US Cavalry officer and writer for pulp adventure magazines, decided to go into the comic book business. Like many pioneers, the dapper major was long on enthusiasm and short on cash. Nonetheless, he was able to launch the outfit which today publishes *Superman* and *Batman* as DC Comics Inc. Nicholson, unfortunately, went broke back there in the Thirties and had to turn over his fledgling company to the folks who eventually did quite a bit better. It was in the sixth issue of the Major's premiere magazine, *More Fun*, that the first horror-oriented comic book feature showed up. The work of two Cleveland teenagers, Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster, the strip was called, with youthful directness, *Dr. Occult*. The good doctor, billed as a ghost detective, had a strong facial resemblance to Superman, the character Siegel and Shuster would finally manage to sell three years later. He dressed in the trench coat and snap brim hat style much favored by movie reporters and detectives of the period. His steady girl was named, aptly enough, Rose Psychic.

Inspired by the science fiction and weird tale pulps they'd grown up on, Siegel and Shuster filled *Dr. Occult* with some pretty strange stuff. Especially strange for a strip sharing the pages of *More Fun* with such tame features as *Buckskin Jim, Sandra of the Secret Service* and *Little Linda*. Dr. Occult's first big case pitted him against

Above, the Spectre often went to heaven to get information from a departing soul.

the Vampire Master, who had invented a very complex gadget called the Thought Materializer. With it he's been able to create "monsters of the mind, creatures of the imagination." His career is cut short when one of his creations stabs him in the heart. The moral, delivered by one of the survivors, is "He might have been a great benefactor to humanity had fate willed it." In subsequent investigations, each of which stretched through several issues in two and four page installments, Occult encountered werewolves, snake gods, spectral killers, zombies and Egyptian curses. His most unsettling case was the one involving the Ray of Life. In that one Occult not only bumps into a lady friend who's long dead and still running around ("But this can't be! You've been dead for a year! I, myself attended your funeral!!"), but he dies himself. Not only that, he's buried in the local cemetary. but "with night's descent several indistinct figures hastily attack the new grave with shovels. And shortly later, the moon beams down to illumine a weird sight: filing over the crest of a hill a line of figures bearing the mortal remains of Dr. Occult." He's brought back to life by the Master of the Living Dead and his wonderful ray, manages to outwit him and continues his ghostbreaking career until the spring of 1938. Shuster's artwork on the strip is simple and direct, Siegel's writing sufficiently pulpy and breathless. *Dr. Occult* introduced the standard horror elements to comic books and for a forerunner he wasn't bad.

In the fateful spring of 1938 Major Nicholson's old company, now in the hands of others, took a chance on another of Siegel and Shuster's inventions. They decided to introduce Superman in a new magazine, *Action Comics*. Also debuting in that first issue was a magician named Zatara. The creation of artist Fred Guardineer and writer Garnder Fox, this feature purveryed some pretty grim and grisly stuff over the next few years. Originally intended as an imitation of Mandrake, the *Zatara* strip soon began exploring areas of the weird and occult that would have caused the urbane Mandrake to hide under his bed. Fox, a young lawyer with a great fondness for *Weird Tales* and especially the work of H.P. Lovecraft and Robert E. Howard, made use of a goodly amount of supernatural material in his scripts. His first two years on the job Zatara met up with the mummy of Cheops; visited Atlantis and battled sea serpents and a giant octopus; encountered, while hunting for a fountain of youth in Brazil, a zombie queen ("I have been dead a thousand years, rash stranger! You are doomed!") whose throne was surrounded by huge slithering snakes; defeated a hooded villain who had trained giant condors to murder people out on the moors; tangled with another ancient evil queen who exchanged her withered old body. for that of a lovely young girl. One particularly memorable adventure took Zatara and his Lothar-like sidekick to a remote South American country where a mad scientist had created an army of intelligent gorillas. The master magician invades the scientist's fortress, releases his slaves and leads them in bloody battle. Fred Guardineer did one of his best gruesome illustrating jobs, complete with blood-dripping swords and lopped off gorilla heads.

Although Guardineer later said he much preferred drawing cowboys, he did some effective work on these mystical features. Possessed of an eccentric, slightly stiff style, he filled his pages with bold shapes and bright colors. He was particularly good with the props of the weird landscapes Zatara roamed. A Guardineer corpse is obviously dead, his mummies look countless centures old and riddled with decay, his zombie queens are both regal and obviously defunct. Skulls abound, too. You find them grinning at you from shelves, lying lopsided on burning deserts and misty swampland, peeking out of the shadows of deep, gloomy caverns. Snakes were also one of Guardineer's specialties, there's hardly a Zatara story that doesn't have at least one slithering thorugh it somewhere. Many times he was able to combine two of his favorite motifs and draw a snake crawling in and out of a gaping skull. By the early 1940s Zatara, whose immense magical powers all stemmed from his discovery that words said backwards had unfailing effect ("Sallirog llaf ot ruoy htaed!" he once advised some gorillas), became quite sedate. He took to combating gangsters, murderers, bank robbers and other dull types. For a while there, he enjoyed weird times.

From this early Batman story, you can see him resorting to using a gun to kill a vampire. The girl he rescues, Julie, was his finace at the time, 1939.

Before he spoke backwards, Zatara used his magic to confront all sorts of mystical and occult enemies.

Leger and Reuths is a pseudonym for the team of Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster who created Dr. Occult and a guy called Superman.

Batman commenced his career a little less than a year after Superman. A self-taught hero with no super powers, the caped crusader was the creation of Bob Kane and unsung writer Bill Finger. Early in the Batman's career, however, several of his scripts were the work of Gardner Fox and these brought in a weird element which would influence the adventures for the next several years. A two-part story, in the September and October 1939 issues of *Detective Comics*, pitted Batman against a vampire called the Monk. When Bruce Wayne's girlfriend is kidnapped by the red hooded villain, he pursues her first to France. There Batman is almost done in by a gigantic gorilla which the Monk keeps in his Paris residence. Later in Hungary, the vampire capital of the world, Batman overcomes a pack of werewolves, kills the vampire in his coffin with silver bullets and rescues his girl. These stories are rich with the trappings of horror movies—a fog-shrouded castle, a moonlit graveyard, a phantom coach, a pair of vampires asleep in their coffins. And, of course, Batman was a grim figure in those early days, lurking in shadows, huddling on rooftops and often looking like a skulking vampire himself.

Jerry Siegel's next contribution to weird funnies came along early in 1940, again in the pages of *More Fun Comics*. His new hero was guaranteed to be spooky, since he was dead. Tough redheaded cop Jim Corrigan is knocked off in classic gangster fashion by being tossed in the river in a barrel of cement. His spirit zips heavenward and a great light, presumably God, gives him a pep talk. "Your mission on Earth is unfinished . . .You shall remain earthbound battling crime on your world, with supernatural powers, until all vestiges of it are gone!!"

Saddled with what looks to be a fulltime job, Corrigan plummets back home. In some mystical fashion I'm still not clear on, his spirit is able to go around looking just like his late body, down to sincere suit and tie. He decides though, he ought to have a hero suit to battle crime and we see him sewing up one. Donning a green cloak and hood and somehow making the pupils of his eyes disappear, Corrigan becomes the Spectre (nobody in my unsophisticated grade school crowd could pronounce this word and we called him the "Spectry."). The early adventures, drawn in somewhat clunky fashion by Bernard Bailey, were fairly strange. The Spectre had frequent conversaions with the Almighty, made occasional trips to the hereafter to get clues from departed souls and he once went "into the depths of infinity," which was mostly clouds, in search of a supernatural villain. He could walk through walls, turn crooks into skeletons and, on the covers at least, grow as tall as a downtown office building. A grim chap, the Spectre enjoyed killing the crooks he went after. "One less vermin to peril decency," he observed after one such bit of vigilante work. Tame when compared to the horrors unleashed by the comic books of the 1950s, these early Spectre tales nonetheless managed to scare those of us who eagerly consumed them at the time.

More Fun, which certainly wasn't living up to its name anymore, hit us with another weird hero just a few months after introducing Siegel's ghost. Dr. Fate was one more Gardner Fox concoction, drawn in a stylized but creepy fashion by Howard Sherman. "Dwelling apart from mankind

The Spectre frequently spoke with a voice that was never attributed to but is believed to be that of God.

In this early Dr. Fate story, you can see him use his magics to protect people from evil with his aide Inza by his side.

in his lonely tower north of ghost-ridden Salem is the mysterious Dr. Fate," an early caption explained, "who calls upon secret and ancient sources for the power with which he fights unusual crimes." Unusual indeed. Fate, who wore a blue and gold superhero costume and a metal helmet which completely concealed his face, specialized in besting ancient evil Mayan gods, combating globemen from outer space, defeating horrors summoned from the cosmic void and counseling young women who suspected they might be werepards. In one adventure with his recurrent enemy, Wotan the Wizard, he went first to Hell for a chat with the skeletal boatmen on the River Styx and then up to talk to God, again depicted as a blinding light. Dr. Fate had a very svelte lady companion named Inza. She fell into perils that would give even Lois Lane pause. In its early phases her romance with Fate didn't run smooth (How, for instance, do you kiss a man who never takes off his tin mask?) Things weren't helped by conversations like this:

...CHRONICLING THE CAREERS OF COMIC BOOK WEREWOLVES, ZOMBIES, MONSTERS, SATANIC EMISSARIES, GHOSTS, FIENDS AND SUNDRY OTHERS...

INZA: Did you really know Mayoor before?

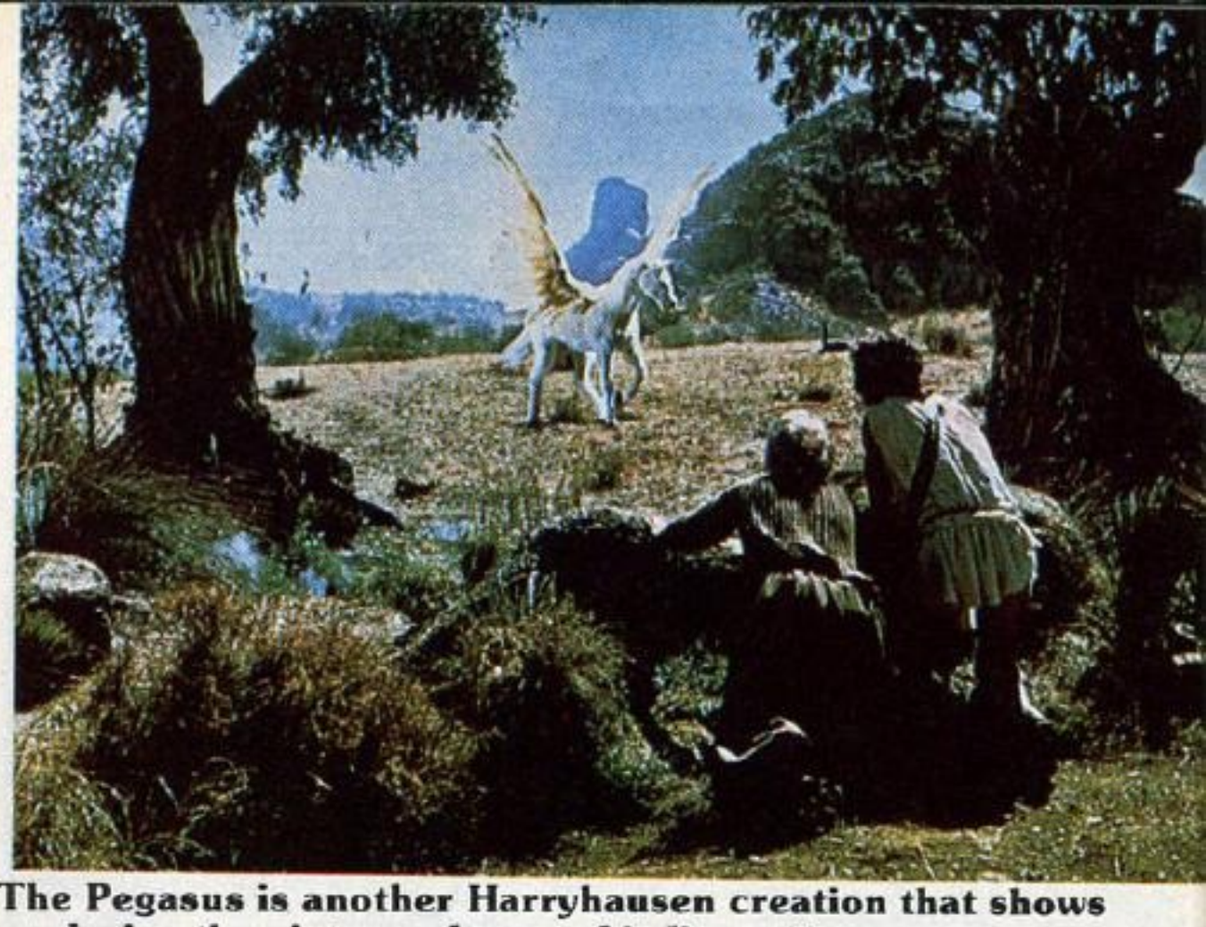
FATE: Yes, we lived centuries ago when the world was young, but he was evil!

The increasing success of the Superman-DC line of comics, as success often does, made the whole outfit more conservative. The gruesome details began to fade as the 1940s got underway. Dr. Fate sawed off the lower half of his mask so you could see him smile once in awhile. He admitted he was just a regular guy with a few super powers. He could still fly, but he quit claiming he was thousands of years old and he moved out of that stone tower up in Lovecraft country. The Spectre toned down, too, becoming a very respectable spook. Those of us who wanted grim thrills and horror had to look elsewhere.

Which is what we'll be doing in our next installment.

(Editor's Note: A lot of readers may wonder about discrepancies in the origins of several characters like Zatara and Dr. Fate. Ron has been giving you the historical background. Modifications and changes of the characters will be covered when this series gets to modern times.)

An example of Dynamation in action: Persues (Harry Hamlin) as he is stalked by the Gorgon.



The Pegasus is another Harryhausen creation that shows up during the picture, alone and in live action.

Clash of the Titans

The gods at war as only Ray Harryhausen can orchestrate them!

By ROBERT GREENBERGER

Zeus, Aphrodite, Hera, Poseidon. These are some of the most powerful gods ever to walk the Earth. From the Greek myths and legends they grew and to this day remain a part of the Western world's culture. In recent years, people have probably forgotten about them but that will change when MGM releases *Clash of the Titans* in June.

The gods come to life with one of the most distinguished casts ever assembled for a fantasy film. Sir Laurence Olivier rules the gods as Zeus, Claire Bloom is his wife, Hera, and Ursula Andress plays Aphrodite, goddess of love.

Among the mortals are Burgess Meredith as Ammon, chronicler of the gods; with newcomers Harry Hamlin as Perseus and Judi Bowker as Andromeda. The cast is rounded out with Sian Phillips as Cassiopeia, Queen of Joppa; Maggie Smith as Thetis, goddess of the sea and Jack Gwillim as Poseidon, ruler of the seven seas.

But to bring the mythological beasts and creatures to life, MGM turned to a superstar in his own right: Ray Harryhausen. This will be the sixteenth movie where Harryhausen has had the opportunity to employ his own brand of magic—dynamation, a process involving stop motion animation, models and miniatures. Through dynamation, Harryhausen has enabled skeletons to walk, seven armed warriors to do battle and created monsters that others can only dream about.

Being a big budget film that has been heavily promoted by MGM, everything about the film has been done first rate with location shooting around the world and an 18 month post-production schedule. Trailers, with the first glimpses of Harryhausen's latest magic, appeared during the Christmas season. The work was not even completed when the trailer was made but the few seconds of Harryhausen's work made audiences ooh and aah appreciatively.

Harryhausen actually finished his part on the film at the end of January, more than a year after he had begun post-production work. He said at the time post-production began, "It is always a frame-by-frame process which takes time. One of the greatest problems in this field is that after everyone's forgotten the picture you have to go on keeping excited and interested in what you are doing in order to go on for another year. Sometimes it gets a bit dismal but I survive."

As he neared completion of his work on *Clash*, Harryhausen consented to a mail interview with FANGORIA. We were able to ask him about some of the new work that will appear in *Clash*, such as Calibos, perhaps the most complex character Harryhausen worked on. An actor, Neil McCarthy, wears make-up when he appears as Calibos during scenes with other actors. The rest of the time, Calibos, a half-man, half-creature, will be dynamated. "Calibos is indeed a mixture of man and monster, not only in his physical appearance but in his characterization as well. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to find an actor with a switching tail and one satyr-like leg. Make-up and costume can go only so far in creating the illusion. The complete effect is achieved by dynamation, a combination of make-up and animation.

"The problems this imposed on the production required careful matching and planning the shooting. Every scene with Calibos was covered both in production and post-production," Harryhausen said.

When working with dynamation and other special effects, Harryhausen must sometimes take over the director's chair. It takes great care and skill to maneuver the actors around a stage without a monster to react with. Burgess Meredith commented after production, "For an actor, when these monsters or catastrophes appear, the problem is to react and look properly impressed. If you don't, the audience won't be. With this film you have to play it straight. The language does not have the weight of Shakespeare, but you fill your language as best you can with meaning, sincerity and with reality. I suppose it is possible to play this camp, as I did in *Batman* a few years ago, but we are not, we are playing it straight on."

Harryhausen sees *Clash* as a natural sequel to his successful 1963 film, *Jason and the Argonauts*. "The subject of Greek Mythology is of course a natural choice for the process of dynamation. Most of the grotesque characters are already established as part of the story.

"The greatest complications occur when the dynamated actors have to speak lines or become too intricately involved in subtle actions. Some of the problems were

PHOTOS: © 1981 MGM

Harryhausen has almost perfected the dynamation process and carefully integrates it with live action. Left is a model of Perseus in battle with a giant scorpion. On the right is a finished scene of the epic battle.

solved using actors for close-ups and dialogue. Stop-action characters, when combined with water or visual catastrophes make it necessary to resort to a variety of film techniques which all take enormous amounts of time to plan and execute. I do not want to get involved at this time, of describing in detail where make-up takes over and animation ends. It would only aid in the destruction of the illusion we are trying to create. A film should first of all be enjoyed as a film before it is subject to analysis. Let each viewer decide for himself where this division takes place, if at all, anyone cares."

But when the time comes for the animation to take over, Harryhausen works closely with the crew. In this case, he worked with Director Desmond Davis and his long-time associate Charles Schneer. Harryhausen said, "As with all of the pictures Charles Schneer and I have made together, I have always been involved from the pre-script planning down to final editing. In this very specialized form of film making, it is necessary to wear many hats some of which cannot be credited. Charles has always given me control as to how the dynamated scenes are to be photographed and executed. An enormous amount of experience is necessary for the efficient and economic control of a shooting schedule. Once the actors and crew have left the production they can seldom be recalled for a forgotten scene. Compromise is always necessary—compromise with the difficulties found on location, and compromise with the actual shooting schedule and unforeseen problems during production. Setting up the camera in just the right place can make the difference, when the dynamation is added, of taking two or three days to animate each cut or two or three weeks. As you well know, time is money."

And when things ran behind, Harryhausen was able to recruit Jim Danforth who had just walked off *Caveman*. Danforth's experience with animation and desire for perfection created problems on the United Artists film so he left, leaving the rest of the work to be finished by his associate Dave Allen. Harryhausen commented, "Jim came over to London specifically to help in the time-consuming process of animation. It was most fortunate he could get away from his own project. There was also a third animator who had been with us for some months, young Steven Archer.

"It has taken a little over one year to complete *Clash of the Titans*' animated and special effects sequences. We would have finished earlier if it had not been for certain technical difficulties. Tracing the source of these technical problems takes many days of careful testing.

"Naturally, any inflexible deadline is a stumbling block. The unforseen can never be fully anticipated. But somehow, over the years, we in the film business have learned to live with this. It is not easy, it causes a number of compromises, but it is understood to be a part of the business."

Helping Harryhausen overcome these problems, even slightly, has been the months spent preparing for production. He is known for making incredibly detailed storyboards of each scene he is directly involved with. "I have always found that a detailed storyboard of the dynamated sequences is very necessary," Harryhausen said. "It gives everyone connected with the shooting of the picture information as to just what elements are needed and what to expect on screen. I usually make the continuity sketches in very rough form as many times they have to be changed on location. As stated earlier, there are always compromises to be made depending on the circumstances at the time. But I would say, in general, the scenes themselves usually come very close to the original concept."

Being able to make the finished version match the original designs takes time and care, especially with an action-adventure film that pits the might of the gods against one another as a mortal tries to find the woman he loves. *Clash*'s story is drawn directly from the centuries old myths. The gods have been clearly delineated with time and people can now study them and their motivations. When studied, the gods appear to be more powerful than mortals but just as susceptible to petty jealousies and the darker side of human nature.

Perseus, son of almighty Zeus, falls in love with Andromeda and tries to win her hand. To do so, he must overcome several barriers the gods have put in his way. The gods interfere to exact their revenge against Zeus, who thwarted their attempt to stifle his authority. Zeus' wife, Hera, was tired of Zeus' constant indulging in rebellious impulses. She conspired with Poseidon, Apollo and Athene to bind Zeus. Theta, wishing to help Zeus, called up a hundred-armed warrior to stop the quartet. Freed, Zeus extracted swift and merciless punishment from the gods who attacked him.

Wishing revenge, the gods do what they can to make life miserable for Perseus. But the gods who side with Zeus do some interfering on their own and aide the youth. Perseus was given the winged-horse, Pegasus, to go on his adventures. Bubo, a mystical owl, accompanies him as well.

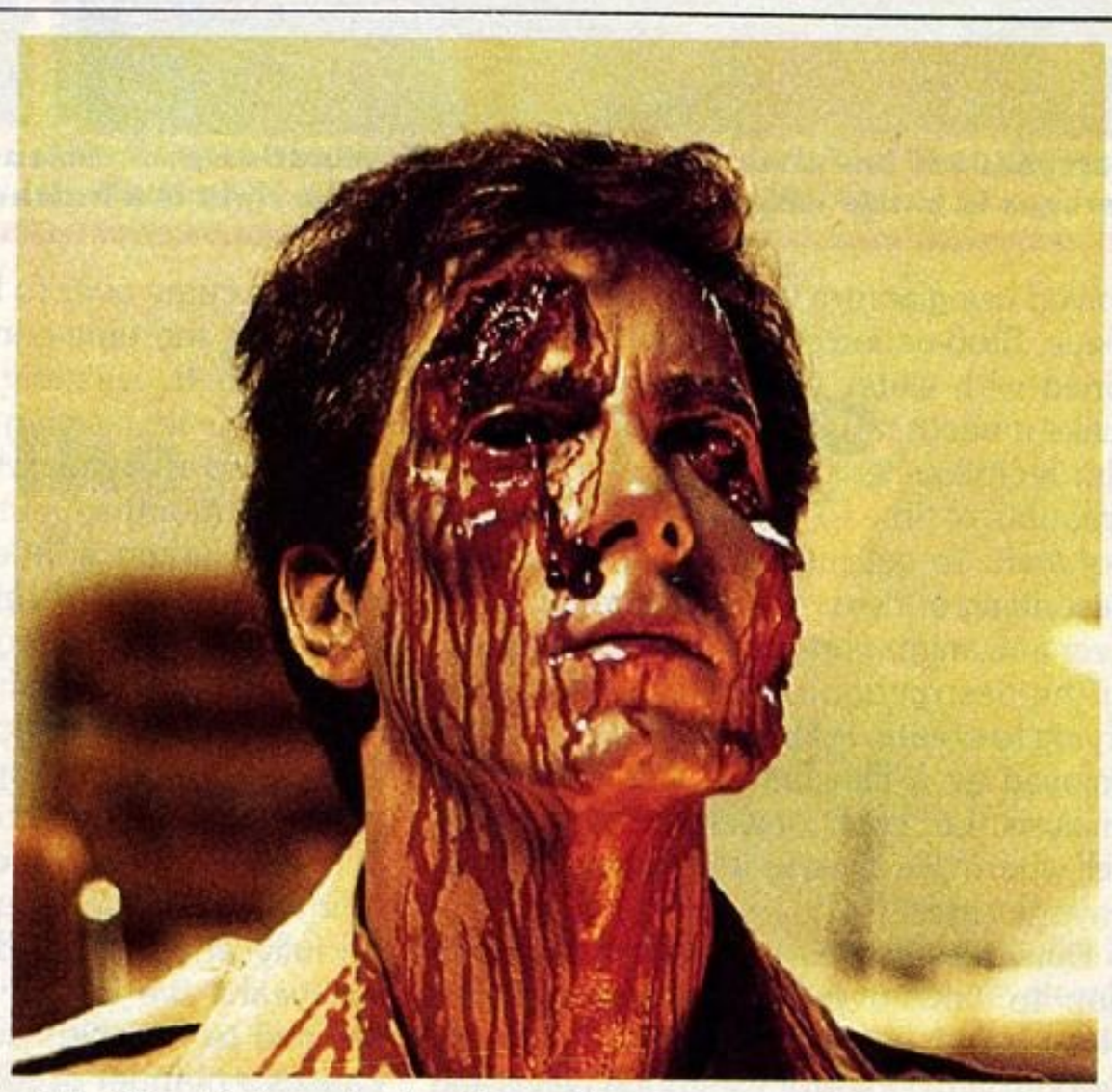
Thanks to Harryhausen, Perseus must battle and defeat a two-headed wolf/dog named Dioskilos, Medusa of the Gorgon's head with the power to turn any living thing into stone, and three Stygian witches that share one eye. One of the film's most climactic scenes, and the one used for the advertising art, is when Perseus flies to the rescue of Andromeda, who is being offered up as a sacrifice to the monstrous Kraken, a sea monster of unparalleled strength and ferocity.

This is, no doubt, the most ambitious film Harryhausen and Schneer have made. If it is as successful as they hope, then there are more films to be made. Harryhausen still would like to make an adaptation of Dante's *Inferno*. "I cannot say at this time exactly what is coming in the future. There are still unrealized dreams, but not many. I have been fortunate in my association with Charles Schneer in being able to realize most of my dreams. The future can only be played by ear," Harryhausen said as he closed his letter.

Editor's Note: For more details on Clash *as well as further interviews with its cast and crew, see the current and future issues of* Starlog.

MONSTER INVASION

Up-to-the-minute warnings of what's coming your way!



OUR ERROR: Last issue, we showed you a test makeup designed by Tom Schwartz for the end sequence in *Scanners*, not used in the final version. In a fit of deadline dizziness, we said it was a head cast, which many might have assumed meant it was Dick Smith's head cast used in that movie's climax. With our apologies to Mr. Smith, Mr. Schwartz, and all of our readers, we hereby present, courtesy of Dick Smith, photos of the head cast that was used in *Scanners*, before and after the "eye-blowing."

SHOCK TREATMENT: "It's not so much a sequel . . . more a way of life," Richard O'Brien told *Rocky Horror* fans in New York 18 months ago when speaking about the long awaited sequel to the cult classic—the only film that matters to some of the folks we know. But you know that much already, since you read our report in issue #5—*right?* Anyway, here's the news—*Shock Treatment* has been completed, a select few have seen it in advance screenings, and plans for an elaborate release in fall or early winter is now being planned by 20th Century-Fox. We managed to find one fellow who'd seen it (everybody else—you're all virgins!), who shared with us a bit of the plot. "It's so bizarre that it's hard to pin down," our source tells us, "but it begins at a small town TV station; Brad and Janet are participants in a game show, and it takes off from there." Returnees include: Richard O'Brien, castmember, lyricist, co-screenwriter, composer; Jim Sharman, director; Richard Hartley, composer, musical director; Brian Thompson, production designer; Sue Blaine, costume designer; and castmembers Patricia Quinn, Nell Campbell and Charles Gray. New castmembers are Cliff de Young (Brad), Jessica Harper (Janet), Barry Humphries, Manning Redwood, Darlene Johnson and Ruby Wax. Director Sharman describes the film thusly; "It acknowledges the great tradition of Hollywood musicals like *Singing in The Rain* and *The Bandwagon*, while taking that tradition in an entirely new direction." A FANGORIA interview with the godfather of the Rocky cult, Richard O'Brien, is now in preparation.

PHOTO © 1975 TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX

O'Brien and friend in *RHPS*.

VIDEODROME: That's the name of the next film from FANGORIA's fave rave Dave Cronenberg (David, actually, but that doesn't rhyme). That's all we can tell you, 'cause that's all we know. Still, this little bit of information does merit a *Monster Invasion* item, because it enables us to report a hot rumor—that Avco Embassy Pictures has proposed a *Scanners* TV series to a major network, with creator D. Cronenberg as story consultant. Of course, we've heard news like this before (like the *ALIEN* and *'Salem's Lot* series plans which never came out), but we thought you'd like to know anyway.

GHOST STORY: Peter Straub's bestselling novel, reviewed this issue, has been adapted to the screen by Lawrence D. Cohen (screenwriter for *Carrie*), and began shooting in Sarasota Springs, NY on January 19. Melvyn Douglas (of *The Changeling*)and John Houseman (of *The Fog*) star, along with two young newcomers to the horror screen, Fred Astaire and Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., and Patricia Neal, the wife of macabre fantasist Roald Dahl. John Irvin (whose *Dogs of War* is currently in release) is directing for producer Burt Weissman and co-producer Douglas Green. We are specially pleased to announce that Dick Smith is handling the film's special effects. Smith, who has already forgiven us for last issue's errors (see our letters page), tells

us that his main task will involve the character of Eva Galli, the ghost of the title. "There are a couple of occasions in the story where a sort of manifestation of Eva returns for one or another nefarious purpose; I can't tell you too much about this, but I will go so far as to say that it's not a makeup, but a dummy, a form, that I think should provide a good shock here and there." Mark your calendar for December, 1981, its planned release date—this could be the A-grade, grand scale thriller that we'd all hoped *The Shining* would be.

BLADE RUNNER: It was back in issue #7 that we first told you that Ridley Scott, *ALIEN*'s director, was developing a film project from Philip Dick's tale of love after World War III, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* After some on-again off-again wrangling with Filmways Pictures, the Scott project is now at the Ladd Company—sort of like home for Scott, who worked with many of the Ladd personnel at 20th Century-Fox for *ALIEN*. Shooting began on March 9, with Harrison Ford in the lead role as a 21st century cop. Douglas Trumbull, director of *Silent Running* and the man behind some of the most spectacular effects in *2001*, *Close Encounters*, and (let's not forget) *Star Trek—The Motion Picture*, is at work on the effects right now! (Trumbull, by the way, has a directorial project or two of his own—more on that next issue.) *Blade Runner*'s release, in 70mm and six-track dolby stereo, is scheduled for May, 1982.

UFORIA: Cindy Williams plays a small town girl with her head in the clouds. Cindy's character, Arlene, is convinced that Adam and Eve were colonizing astronauts and some other alien types are ready to land on Earth—and she wants to be aboard their spacecraft. Along the way she picks up a group of followers who feel she is a visionary. To Brother Bud

PHOTO: © 1981 20th Century Fox

Cindy Williams plays an air head?

(Harry Dean Stanton), the group appears to be another mass he can exploit with his combination precher act and stolen car ring. Then there is Sheldon (Fred Ward). He falls in love with Arlene while trying to make it as a country and western singer.

The comedy was written and directed by John Binder for Melvin Simon Production and the movie will be released sometime this year from 20th Century Fox.

AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON: As we write, principal filming on the John Landis/Rick Baker "dream project" has just become a reality. Production started in Wales on February 2, and as you read this, things should be winding up in London, with Landis directing stars David Naughton, Jenny Agutter, Griffin Dunne and John Woodvine. Release is currently planned for August of

Win a Night with Stephen King or James Herbert!

By arrangement with New American Library, we are offering 65 of our readers the most chilling night of their live—a night spent with the work of the world's two most popular contemporary writers in the field of horror—James Herbert and Stephen King! King, of course, needs no introduction to readers of FANGORIA; his novels and stories have made him one of the most popular writers in any field, and one of the true arbiters of what constitutes terror in fiction and in film. Novelist James Herbert is not quite so well known in the United States as he is in his native Britain, but to fans of truly graphic horror, his manner of combining scenes of excruciating physical terror with tales of supernatural menace is without challenge in the field.

But that's not all! Stephen King, who tells us he's one of FANGORIA's most avid readers, has kindly agreed to *personally autograph* one of each of his novels, for six of the drawing's winners! The first six winners drawn will receive a signed King novel, regardless of the preference indicated on their ballot.

Eligibility for this contest depends on your ability to predict the outcome of the FANGORIA Second Anniversary Movie Poll, appearing below. After telling us of your likes and dislikes, tell us which films you think your fellow Fangorians will choose as their favorites among movies released since our first appearance, in June of 1979. If more than 60 entrants guess three out of three correctly (highly unlikely), we'll hold a drawing for our winners. If less than 60 guess all three movies in the proper order, the remaining prizes will go to readers who guess the top two films correctly.

To be counted in the poll and eligible for the contest, all ballots must be received in our offices by May 20th—so *get crackin'!*

FANGORIA's Second Anniversary Movie Poll

Among the horror films released since FANGORIA's first appearance in June of 1979, my three favorites have been:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

In the same period, the three I liked the least were:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Among all the horror films release before June, 1979, my favorites are:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Through my uncanny predictive powers, I have determined the three most popular films among FANGORIA readers, among those movies released after June of 1979. They are:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Once you realize that my guesses are all correct, please send me one of the three books I have circled below. (First come first served—and if you're out of all three of my choices, you'll use your discretion in selecting an alternate prize)
KING: *Carrie, 'Salem's Lot, The Shining, Night Shift, The Stand, The Dead Zone.*
HERBERT: *Fluke, The Lair, The Rats, The Spear, The Fog, The Dark, The Survivor.*

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

No duplicates will be accepted. Remember to have your ballot in our offices by May 20th!

1981, nearly 12 years after Landis wrote his first-draft script. "One problem in getting this film produced," Landis told us back in issue #2, "is that people read the script and say either, 'It's too scary to be funny,' or 'It's too funny to be scary.' It will be violent, gory, terrifying and hilarious, all at the same time."

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ME: Not to be confused with *Bloody Birthday*, this Canadian film is currently in wide release around the country from Columbia. The shocker stars Melissa Sue Anderson *(Little House on the Prairie)* and Glenn Ford and was directed by J. Lee Thompson and produced by Andre Link and John Dunning.

Faithful readers may recognize the names of the people involved in doing the special make up effects for all eleven murders (count 'em). Michelle Burke *(Terror Train)*, Stephan DuPuis *(Scanners* and *The Fright)* and Tom Schwartz *(Scanners)* combine their talents to create new thrills and chills. Much of the $3.5

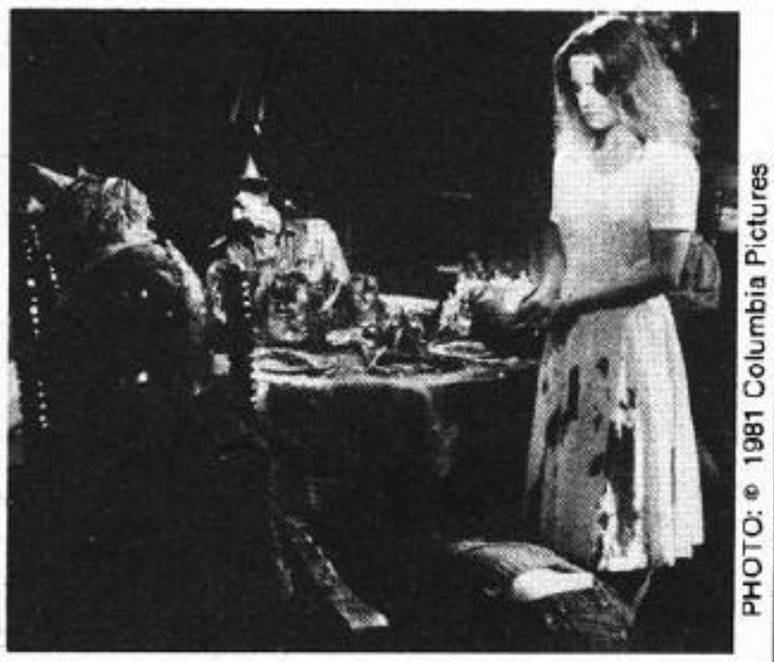


PHOTO: © 1981 Columbia Pictures

Melissa Sue, right, is in for surprises!

million budget has been set aside for the effects work.

The story, as far as we can tell, involves a New England university town and the strange disappearances of the top ten students. According to *Cinema Canada*, during the filming, the cast and crew did not know who was behind the untimely murders. It wasn't until the end of the shooting schedule that the cast member whodunit find out who he/she was.

The 18 year old Anderson plays a student who learns of the strange disappearances and is haunted by them through some psychic connection. Ford appears as her psychiatrist.

Columbia is expected to spend $4 million to promote the film and Anderson finds the role a refreshing change from playing Michael Landon's daughter. That, and she gets to scream a lot.

THE CAT PEOPLE: We told you a while ago that producer Wilbur Stark had received the go-ahead from Universal for a remake of the Jacques Tourneur/Val Lewton classic. At the tim Roger Vadim was under consideration for the director's chair, but we now understand that Paul Schrader will direct from a script by Alan Ormsby. Good news, right? Now for some of the other kind—planned for the lead role (so subtly played by Simone Simon in 1942) is none other than Bo Derek, who is currently filming *Jane the Ape Woman* in some tropical country or other.

STAB: Last year, the heartwarming *Kramer Vs. Kramer* was frequently used by critics as a club to beat us over the head with their idea of what real movie entertainment is supposed to be. Well, the director of that picture, Robert Benton, and one of its stars, Meryl Streep, are now at work on a very different sort of picture—*Stab*, the story of a Jaqueline-the-ripper type. Since the Streep character will confine her attacks to the male of the species, nobody's gonna call this one sexist. Production is planned to start in early 1982 for United Artists.

DISNEY studios are busy too. With *The Devil and Max Devlin* still running in some theaters, they have the animated *The Fox and The Hound* all set to release in the late summer. Their super-hero, *Condorman*, will be taking to the air in July also.

On their drawing boards are some live action and animated films. Perhaps the most ambitious of these projects will be a film that will return audiences to the land of Oz. Disney has retained the rights to L. Frank Baum's Oz books with the exception of the first book. They are planning to draw from the books as a whole to come up with one story that will most likely be done straight, without singing or dancing. There is also some question as to whether or not Dorothy will return to the enchanted lands.

The early years of Albert Einstein will be covered in a film that is looking for some final crew before going on to the production schedule. Richard Dreyfuss has agreed to participate but his role is unknown. *Fantasia*-like animation will be employed to visualize Einstein's concepts.

Tron will go into production in April and is said to introduce a new animation technology that Disney has developed. It's a fantasy set in the future and takes place in the communications industry.

Kirk Douglas and son Peter will co-produce an adaptation of Ray Bradbury's novel, *Something Wicked This Way Comes*. Disney is currently looking for the right director before going ahead with casting and production.

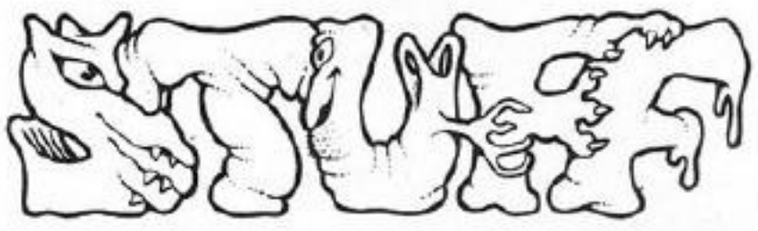
THE SURVIVOR: One of the best horror novelists around is James Herbert, the British author of *The Rats*, *The Fog* (unrelated to Carpenter's film), and most recently *The Dark*. His books have sold over 2½ million copies worldwide, though his work has escaped serious consideration from the press and Hollywood, perhaps because his prose so often straddles the thin line between horror and repulsion. Director Robert Powell (*Thirst*) is currently at work on the first screen treatment of a Herbert novel, *The Survivor*, which concerns an occultist who uses dark powers in order to survive the wreck of a jumbo jetliner. Screenwriter David Andrews has done the adaptation, and shooting will commence upon the completion of Powell's current film, a remake of Hitchcock's *The 39 Steps*.

FANGO's File of Forgotten Films

Psychic Killer (1976) Filmed under the title *The Kirlian Force*.

Avco Embassy, the company that has dominated the field with pictures from Carpenter, Cronenberg and Dante in recent months, was the distributor of this violent (and sometimes funny) all-star thriller which quickly found its way to the nation's TV screens. The late Jim Hutton, well known for his portrayal of likeable innocents, is wrongly placed in a mental institution, and a fellow inmate who just happens to practice voodoo teaches him the fine art of astral projection. After being released with the help of a friendly psychiatrist (Julie Adams of *Creature from the Black Lagoon*), he proceeds to bring destruction to all the creeps who had victimized and tormeted him for their own profit, without even leaving his apartment. A butcher played by Neville Brand (of Hooper's *Eaten Alive*) suffers the most memorable death when, at Hutton's command, he puts his own arm in a meat grinder. TV star Paul Burke, as a policeman, finally figures out how a man, apparently asleep in his home could be responsible for so many gory deaths, and ultimately beats him at his own game. Other stars include the great Whit Bissell (*It was A Teenage Frankenstein*), Rod Cameron (*The Monster and the Girl*) and singer Della Reese. Also with Aldo Ray and Nehemiah Persoff, who were both in George Pal's *The Power*, a similiar, if less sensational, film, made eight years earlier. Ray Danton, who played a dark, handsome heavy in countless Warner Brothers detective shows, and starred opposite Jayne Mansfield in *The George Raft Story*, directed this fun, PG-rated venge-fest, as well as the seldom-seen Robert Quarry hippie-vampire-thriller *The Death Master*.

—*Michael Weldon*



COMICS: Look out for *Warlord* in May because it will be featuring a free 16 page insert, giving readers a chance to meet the newest character to join the DC roster: *Arak, Son of Thunder*. The first issue of *Arak* will be on sale in June.

The monthly comic will be featuring 25 page stories about Arak, an American indian who is found by Vikings and brought over to Europe. This is a nice twist on the usual white man raised as an indian plot. Arak's adventures will be taking place in Europe as he goes from place to place, searching for many things including knowledge and quite possibly searching for religion.

Arak will be in the world during the time of Charlamagne but DC will never mention the fact. According to editor Dick Giordano, there will be no specific mention of where Arak is, what planet he is on, and what time of history it is in. Giordano promises that familiar places will have totally different names.

The character has been running through writer Roy Thomas' mind for quite some time now. It seems he wanted to write a novel involving Arak when he was still at Marvel but once he signed a contract with DC, he thought the character would make for a good comic. Giordano and the powers that be agreed with Thomas and work was begun.

"Roy did tremendous amounts of research for the novel," Giordano said. "He went out and bought books on the era and when it became a comic, he bought duplicate copies of the books so the editor and artist can have the same reference material."

Giordano added that he loves working with Thomas; the two worked on an unfinished adaptation of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* for Marvel some years back. And when it came time

ART: © 1981 DC Comics Inc.

to choose an art team, Giordano turned to Ernie Colon and Tony DeZuniga. "I've always liked Colon's ability to lay out a panel. He can decorate a panel and lay it out attractively. We went to high school together, then lost contact over the years and we both ended up drawing comics.

"We were trying for a different look but the choice of Tony kind of counters that. He's a realistic embellisher. He adds weight to a page and that's something Ernie's pencils needs. The only problem is to keep an eye out to make sure Tony doesn't start making it look like Conan," Giordano said with a laugh. DeZuniga helped make a name for himself by doing some spectacular embellishments in many issues of *The Savage Sword of Conan*.

Giordano feels the book will do well with the fans who get their comics in specialty shops. It may take a few issues before the newsstand buyers catch on to the title. When we spoke with him, he had not seen any finished stories but based on the scripts he has read for the preview and the first two issues, each one improves upon what has already been written. As time goes on, secondary characters will be introduced and expanded upon, giving some weight to the storyline as opposed to Conan's nomadic wanderings.

The art with this piece is a preview character sketch sent to us by Colon. Something special for the readers since everyone else will see it inked by DeZuniga .

HAMMER INTERNATIONAL: The editor of this organization's journal is the author of our look at "Hammer—1981" this issue, Keith Dudley. We asked him to outline some of the club's activities for interested readers:

"The club was formed some 18 months ago in a blaze of publicity; radio coverage, local newspaper interviews—our first convention even made the centre (*Ed.*—That's U.K. for center) pages of a well-known national paper. Four issues of the club's journal are published every year, which run from 30 to 40 pages and contain Hammer news, film reviews, interviews and a prize quiz. Forthcoming attractions include interviews with Ralph Bates, Jimmy Sangster, Alan Gibson and Val Guest. The club holds two weekend film conventions a year in London, which are always well-attended by top names from the world of Hammer; and we show a full programme of Hammer films every time. For future cons we hope to show films that nobody has yet seen. Because of high postal rates, membership prices vary from continent to continent. U.K.—4.50 Pounds, Europe—5.50 British Pounds, U.S.A. and the rest of the world—$20.00 U.S.

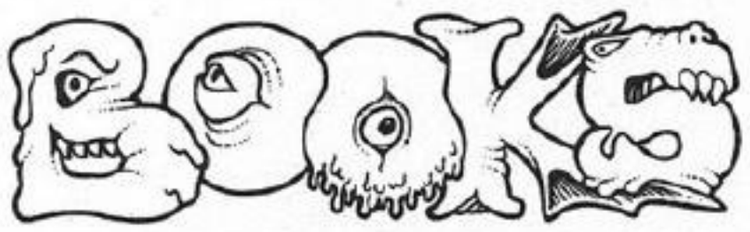
We already have a number of American members who fly over for the conventions. Membership forms can be obtained by writing to Keith Dudley, 4 Sheriff Close, Prebendal Farm, Aylesbury, Bucks England. Please include a self-addressed envelope and two International Reply Coupons."

ABC really was busy in February, constantly shuffling and cleaning up their schedule for the ratings "sweeps." The airdates for several shows were constantly up in the air and titles were also being changed along the way. By the time our last issue had gone to the printer, ABC had moved *This House Possessed* into a late January slot and had given *The Lucifer Rig* two titles, several airdates and finally broadcast it as *The Intruder Within* on February 20. As we told you last time, ABC is seriously considering a sequel to the latter show so there may be a rerun in the offing as well.

CBS, meanwhile, has been giving the animated special, *Faeries*, a runaround. The show, which we featured in issue #10, was all set for an April airdate but was slotted behind a Peanuts special for February 25. Steve Leiva told us that the animators were bargaining with CBS to move the show back to March but at last report their efforts were getting them nowhere.

FORCE FIVE: We've been asked by several readers whatever happened to this package of five Japanese hit TV shows that were being reworked for syndication in America. The production took more time to get ready for selling the package than Jim Terry expected, but his partner, Greg Kirkelie stopped by our offices recently and told us that the shows were almost completed. By the time you read this, all 130 episodes are ready for sale, the show is currently on in the Boston area and more stations will begin carrying the show by the Fall.

Kirkelie expects the major promotional push and sale of the shows to occur next year. Meanwhile, he and Terry are exploring merchandising and even a fan club. They are also negotiating with the Ladd Co. and Warner Communications to do a live-action film based on the Force Five concept. So you can be pretty sure something will be happening soon involving these interstellar warriors.



STEPHEN KING and BERNI WRIGHTSON have signed on with Christopher Zavisa's Land of Enchantment to do a book together. Zavisa isn't telling us what it is about but he has King's copy in his hands so this is well under way. Zavisa recently was able to start selling his *Berni Wrightson: A Look Back* after settling legal difficulties with his printer. The book, a collection of art and a talk with the famed comic and fantasy artist, has been selling tremendously well. That's a good sign, considering that the hardcover book sells for around $60.

***Ghost Story* by Peter Straub**
Pocket Books $2.95

***Shadowland* by Peter Straub**
Coward, McCann and Geoghegan $12.95

Harlan Ellison once said that some readers of Science Fiction would have their friends or parents read the stories of Ray Bradbury just to prove to them that there really *was* intelligent, tasteful, and highly crafted reading to be found among all "that sci-fi stuff." For those who are faced with a similiar situation when trying to convince someone to read "that supernatural horror junk," Peter Straub is a good place to start when you want to prove a point.

Although not as prolific as Robert Bloch or as widely read as Stephen King, Straub has had many critical admirers (including the two writers just mentioned) from the publication of his first horror novel to his latest. His first two horror novels (his first was a "mainstream" novel), *Julia* and *If You Could See Me Now*, were well received critically, and are both still in print. Both novels deal with themes which reoccur through all of Straub's novels—supernatural powers revenging themselves upon the living.

But, like most good writers, Straub's talent increases with every novel. And when *Ghost Story* was first published in hardcover in 1979 it was on the *New York Times* Bestseller list for five months. This time both the public and the critics gave Straub the recognition he deserved.

As Straub himself briefly explained the motivation for writing *Ghost Story*, "the novel refers back to the classic American novels and stories of the genre by Henry James and Nathaniel Hawthorne . . . I was moved by a desire to look into, examine, and play with the genre—to take these 'classic' elements as far as they could go." The story takes place in a small town in New York, where five men eventually come to the realization that they are being preyed upon by the ghost of a woman they had all been involved with when they had been young men, decades earlier. This ghost is in fact a "shapechanger" of folk legend, possessing the ability to enter the men's lives as different women or as girls, but always having a name with the initials that read "A.M."

Structuring the novel in a manner similiar to the format of *'Salem's Lot* (Straub and King are very good friends and Straub freely admits to borrowing the format to intertwine the action of so many characters), Straub builds a number of separate horror sub-plots which, in a jigsaw puzzle fashion, all come together at the end for a most gruesome—and satisfying—climax.

In *Shadowland*, Straub has written a novel that is again designed for the enjoyment—and the frustration at first glance—of being a literary jigsaw puzzle. Straub has a fascination with characters who are writers (two of the main characters in *If You Could See Me Now* and *Ghost Story* are academic or professional writers), and the narrator here is a man who is writing a book-within-the-book about a character named Tom Flanagen. As a boy, the fictional Flanagen spent a summer battling a magician of unnatural powers—"a wizard." A man with the power to make illusory events in his or other people's lives seem as believable as the "real" events.

Although at times the number of stories within stories which may or may not have occured to a particular character is, in a word, confusing, Straub is able to tie up all the loose ends at the end. Straub has told FANGORIA he is unable to write short stories (he was asked to be included in the recent, massive *Dark Forces* anthology but politely refused), *Shadowland* is in fact a novel that is composed completely of different short stories. Needless to say, many are horror stories that are as nasty and explicit

as one might find, no matter what the length.

The term "literary writer" is sometimes as foolhardy to apply to someone as is the term "hack writer." But the intelligence and good taste which pervades Straub's novels is as refreshing as the degree to which he also possesses the equally difficult ability to frighten the reader. Straub is the type of writer where, instead of reading a single paragraph that details a scene of explicit grue, Straub will take five chapters that will lead up to a single sentence that serves even more effectively to make you sit straight in your chair. Like the writers he admires, James and Hawthorne, Straub disturbs the reader by leaving a trail of clues in a story where it is up to the reader—not the author—to read between the lines to obtain the most terrifying conclusions as to just what all those disquieting clues *mean*.

Another quality Straub's writings possess is that he spends as much time creating believable characters as he does the incredible supernatural horrors. So often in horror fiction the characters are just bowling pins set up to be knocked down by the unearthly ball. But we are made to believe so strongly in Straub's characters that once they believe in the unknown, we immediately do as well. As Straub puts it, "You really should have characters for whom you feel deeply . . . and then subject them to whatever godawful thing you're going to subject them to!" If Straub continues going in the direction he has been, he'll be one of the few in the field who successfully intertwines as well the idea of good taste—and great horror.

Stanley Wiater

Monster Invasions is edited by Robert Greenberger with contributions by Bob Martin.

Brooks

(continued from page 51)

Horror. "I'm an actress, not a horror queen," Brooks asserts. "I've heard of Barbara Steele and I'm waiting to see a film with her in it. I hear I have that quality as a horror person and I may be labelled as the new horror sex queen but that's not my intention. I'm an actress, this was a part I played. I want a well-rounded career so I don't get hung up in one area and can't get out."

Brooks adds that she will most likely do another horror film at some point in her career but not soon. And if there is a sequel to *The Howling*, of which there is already talk, then Brooks wouldn't mind reprising her role as the lovely Marsha.

"I don't think I could be in some of those scary movies. In this film, they insinuate that my character does some pretty gross things," Brooks says. Marsha is said to have killed and maimed people and animals throughout the story. "I don't think I could really do it. This is totally new to me. I really haven't had that much experience with horror films. I'm not a great fan of horror movies. I like fantasy movies like *Dracula*, stuff like that. As far as bringing horror into reality such as *Prom Night*, and *Friday the 13th*,, I'm not crazy about that."

Brooks pondered the question of why people go to such films before saying, "I don't know why people go to horror films. I think it may fulfill some frustration they must have or it's exciting. I like love movies. I like love."

The Howling is currently playing around the country and people have begun to take notice of Brooks. While they thrill to her Marsha and dream of her return, Brooks is more than content to run her school for children. "I have an acting school for children I teach on Saturdays," Brooks says. "I write scenes for my children. I have 20 children that I teach and all the scenes they do are written by me. The main reason for that is because it is difficult to find good scenes for kids ages 5-18 to do. So I sit down and write scenes up, trying to gear them to the development of each child, so it's a very personal class. Doing parts Ike Marsha is good because she's such a different person that it gives me a much better background to teach on."

Another child she is working with is her own son, Jeremy. She and the seven year old child live alone, sharing an apartment with a friend who happens to be a member of the Academy of Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror. Brooks says her friend has introduced her to a brand new world: the world where people like Marsha live.

And with that, Brooks turns her energies to preparing a show for her class and practicing her singing. Her manager is also negotiating for a "love" movie for her. So while Brooks waits for the next full moon, she has enough to keep her busy.

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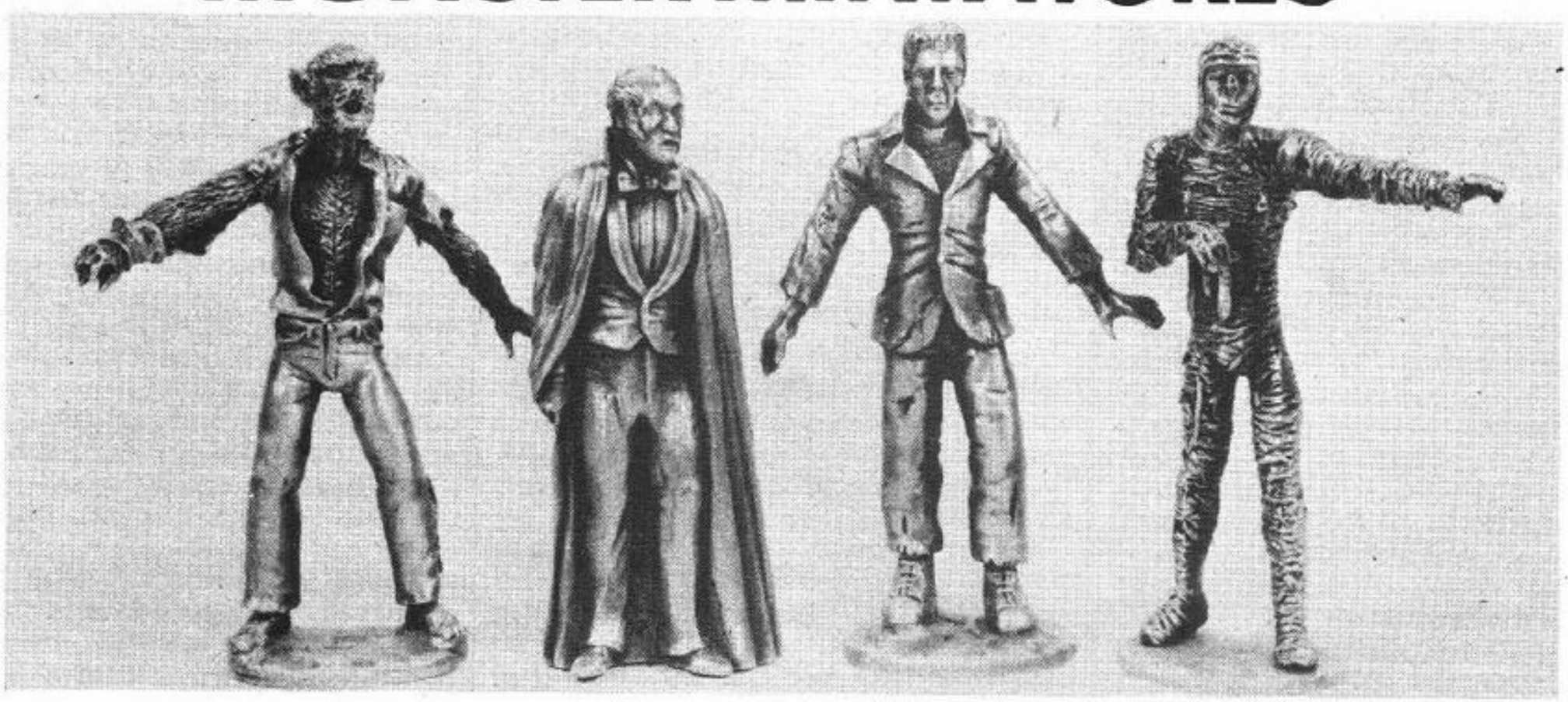

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Pit

(continued from page 9)

for New York audiences and failed despite good performances.

Another Karloff play, *The Shop at Sly Corner*, filmed earlier with Henry Oscar, similarly enjoyed only a brief run. But in *Peter Pan* as Captain Hook opposite Mary Martin in the title role, Karloff finally scored a long running hit to match his great success in *Arsenic and Old Lace* which had been written for him some years before. Back stage he was always most cordial and pleasant and said he would be glad to make another picture in England, it being quite a few years since he filmed there in *The Ghoul, Juggernaut*, and *The Man who Changed His Mind*. Pretty Anna Lee, now married to poet/author Robert Nathan (*Portrait of Jennie*) and one of the stalwarts of Hollywood's British colony, appeared with Karloff in *The Man who Changed His Mind* and *Bedlam* and has fond memories of that association.

Based in Hollywood in the 50's, I tried to develop a property for Karloff and, with Edward D. Wood Jr., had written *The Atomic Monster* and *Doctor Voodoo*, intended as a double horror program, one to star Karloff and the other Bela Lugosi and Lon Chaney Jr. After many months of negotiations with various independent production companies, we lost *The Atomic Monster* title to producer Jack Broder who had read it, turned it down, but used the title for his reissue of *Man-Made Monster*, Universal's Lon Chaney Jr. starred. We threatened suit and he paid off—this was my first association with lawyer Samuel Arkoff who later became a close associate and head of American International Pictures: Allied Artists offered a deal if we used *The Atomic Monster* script for Karloff and the other for Lugosi and Chaney and I visited with Karloff and his wife at the Chateau Marmont Hotel, their usual stay in Los Angeles, and he graciously agreed to do it.

Then Allied changed their minds—they wanted two new scripts, so Eddie Wood used *The Atomic Monster* to make *Bride of the Monster* with Lugosi and I had Ford Beebe, grand old veteran of *Flash Gordon's Trip to Mars* and co-director of Disney's *Fantasia* and producer/director of *Night Monster*, write the new properties. Again Allied switched—now they wanted one script to star all three stars instead of two separate pictures. Lou Rusoff, staff writer at American-International, wrote it—*House of Terror*—but then Allied backed out and the entire deal collapsed. "It was too bad our little scheme didn't work," was Brois Karloff's comment. More than a year of work on my part had one into it all.

Meanwhile, my brother Richard has been active in England producing pictures with American stars I had helped him get. Richard Denning, Pat O'Brien, Zachary Scott, Rod Cameron, Marshall Thompson, Tom Conway and Wayne Morris had appeared in his films and he was now ready for Boris Karloff. We met with the star in his apartment at the Hotel Meurice in New York where he welcomed us warmly and we chatted about his various movies. We admired a vase of beautiful roses which formed a center piece on a large table. "Yes," he said in his inimitable beautifully modulated voice, "such beautiful flowers—what a pity they have to die so soon!"

Richard signed him for one picture with an option for another, and Karloff's only stipulation was that he would not be called to work the week of the Test Matches at Lord's Cricket Ground because he was going to watch them and would not accept a film shooting during that period. He had been an avid cricket fan and player since his early days in Hollywood.

Eventually, Richard made two pictures with Karloff, *Stranglehold* and *The Doctor of the Seven Dials* which were subsequently released in the United States as *The Haunted Strangler* and *Corridors of Blood*. In my next column, we'll be looking at both of these pictures, and Karloff's roles in them.

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Friday

(continued from page 15)

exactly what we needed. The storyboarding was very enjoyable, because it was like putting all the pieces together of a giant puzzle."

Working with Carl Fullerton may have been fun for Steve, but the detailed makeup effects must have caused some of the actors to have doubts about their decision to let themselves be murdered on celluloid.

"They were all good sports about it," notes Miner. "The makeup—particularly Jason's—was terribly uncomfortable. Jason's makeup covered all of the actor's [Warrington Gillette] face. Warrington was in makeup for *six hours* to get the appliances on. Once Warrington had it on, he couldn't eat. Warrington had to do that *twice*, because the first time they filmed the sequence where you get to see what Jason looks like, it didn't work. That was one of the scenes that I didn't figure out properly. There was *a lot* to coordinate. In the first *Friday the 13th*, it took us *three* takes to get the scene where Jason comes up out of the water correctly shot."

Miner's mention of Jason's makeup prompted FANGORIA to remember the controversy that surrounded our coverage of the last film (see FANGORIA #6). On *Part I*, Tom Savini was instructed to make Jason look like a mongoloid. FANGORIA received complaints when we ran a photo feature entitled "How To Make a Mongoloid" (see "The Postal Zone," issue #8). Although Miner claims that Georgetown Productions didn't receive any admonitory letters, Jason doesn't appear as a mongoloid in the sequel.

"*We* never said 'mongoloid,'" Miner insists. "Someone else on the staff did, but I'm not going to pass the buck. That word *was* used, but not to belittle or make fun of handicapped people. 'Mongoloid' was used to describe someone who might be horribly deformed and at the same time be mentally uncapable of taking care of himself. Tom might have just latched onto the word 'mongoloid' and made him look that way."

Along with a "new look" for Jason, Miner also brought to the sequel a new female lead, after spoiling Adrienne King's "girl-next-door" good looks in the pre-credit sequence. Amy Steel fills the lead role of Ginny, the youth who ultimately faces Jason in the final confrontation. Like King's Alice, Ginny is an independent type, but Steel injects her heroine with another quality: sex appeal. Casting Steel in the lead role was a cagey move for Miner, who is aware that fright film fans are fond of starring actresses cut from a traditional, unabashedly sensual mold.

"I think that Hitchcock figured that one out, with Tippi Hedren and the rest," says Miner. "We were really fortunate to get Amy for the part. Our casting agents, Simon and Kumin, did a terrific job scouring New York for the best people, and it shows in the movie. The basics still hold true—you have to care about the characters."

Another coup for Miner was his success in signing Betsy Palmer for a return appearance in the sequel, despite the letter-writing campaign stirred up by Chicago critic Gene Siskel, who encouraged his readers to write to Betsy Palmer at her home town to express their shock at her participating in such a film. The scene that features her cameo appearance is one of the best of the entire movie.

Undoubtedly, Miner's film will have to face some of the critical barbs that were thrown at the Cunningham film. Miner isn't too bothered by the prospect, however.

"Critics don't understand this kind of movie," he says. "You have to show some realistic violence in order to make the setup frightening. You can't scare people nowadays without showing some kind of gore. I have my doubts whether the audience that enjoys 'pure' psychological terror exists anymore.

"You don't necessarily have to dwell on violence, however, to satisfy an audience. Still, I'm sure there will be people, especially critics who will think that we've gone overboard. All I have to say to them is, 'Don't go to see *Friday the 13th, Part II*.' If you don't enjoy this type of picture, fine—but other people do. I can't worry about

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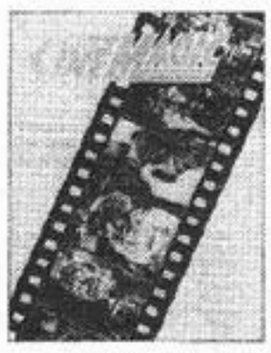

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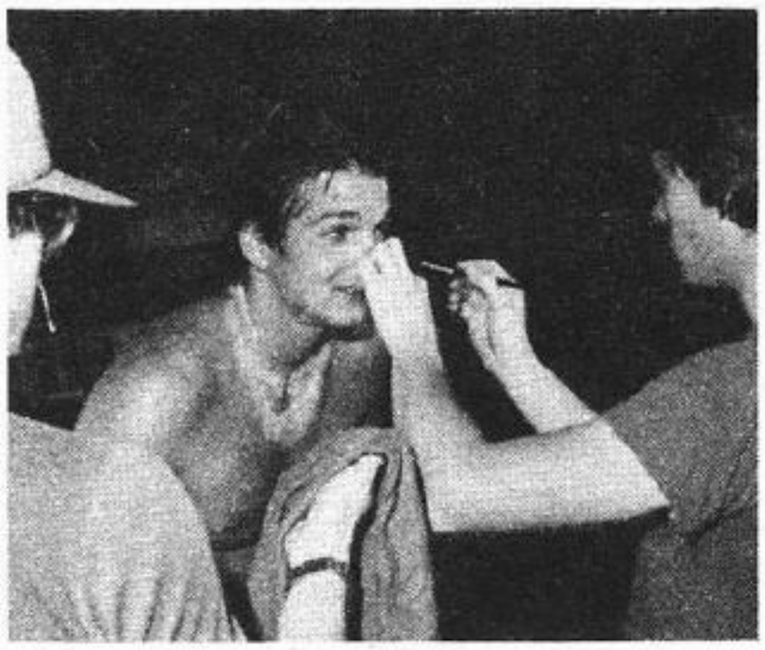


Several views of Carl Fullerton at work, creating a face that only Mrs. Vorhees could love.

what the critics will say. If we made a movie to please the critics, we probably wouldn't be doing justice to our audience."

While Miner may be able to brush off the expected jibes of the critical press, there is one set of critics that cannot be ignored—the ratings board of the Motion Picture Association of America. Since last year, the MPAA has responded to the demands of alarmists like Chicago's Siskel, and have taken a tougher stance on film violence—as anyone knows who has seen the difference between this magazine's coverage of *Bloody Valentine* and the severely cut version that was released to theaters. If the ratings board stamps Miner's current cut of the picture with an X rating, Miner and the picture will have to return to the editing room.

"I *am* worried that we'll have to edit a lot from the film," Miner admits. "I was involved with the trimming that we had to do on the first one, though, and our cutting didn't diminish the movie's effectiveness. We basically just had to tone down some of the excessive blood. If that's all we have to do on this one, it won't be too bad. The success of *Friday the 13th Part II* isn't based on *total* explicitness."

One solution to the possible MPAA problem is to release *Friday the 13th Part II* without a rating. But while small distributors can afford to release their films without the MPAA's approval, Paramount Pictures cannot, since it would cause them political problems with their other, larger-budgeted productions. Isn't this a state that might make Steve wish that his movie was being released by a company like United Films Distribution (the firm that releases George Romero's pictures)?

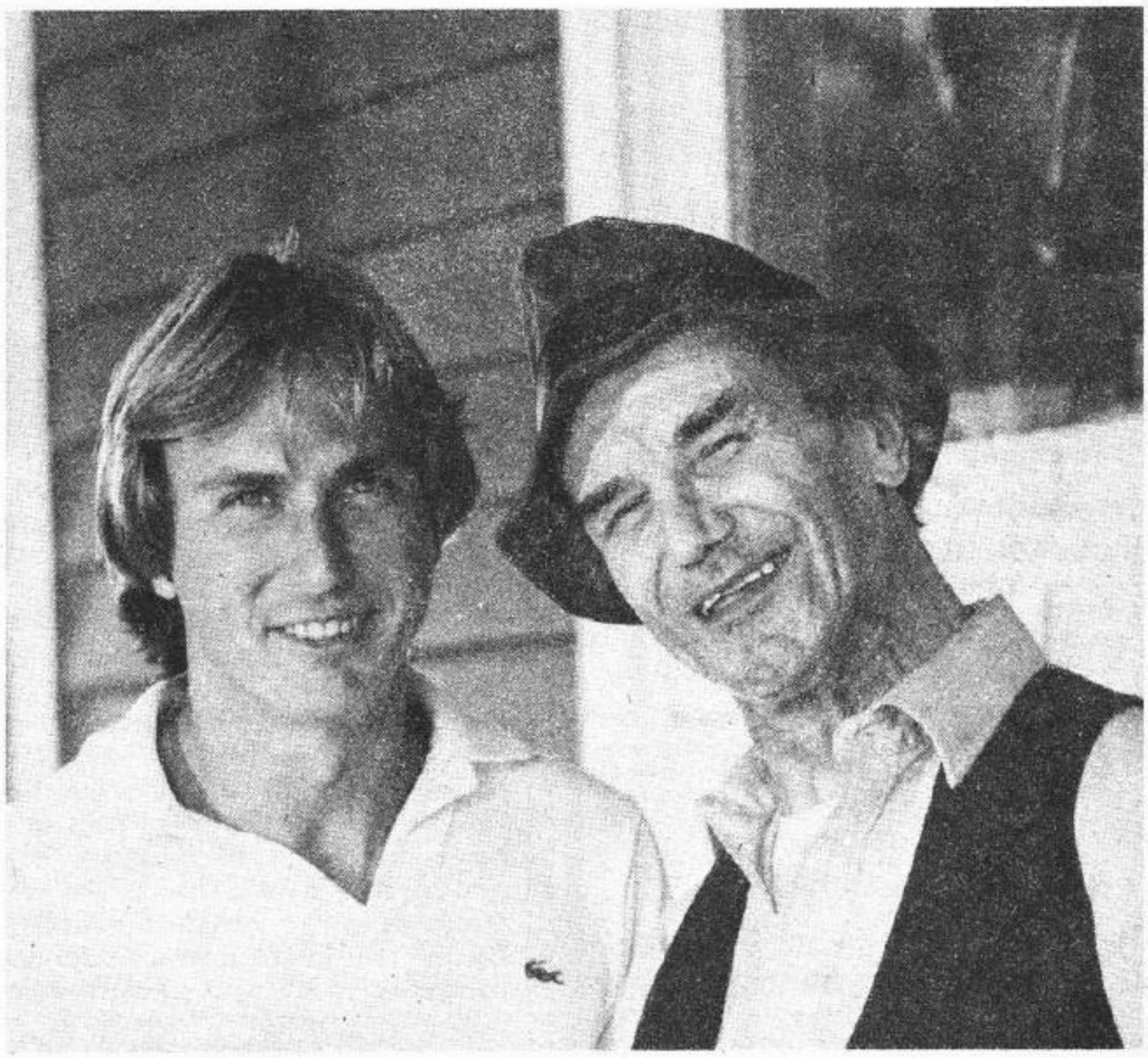
"A major is *always* much more effective in releasing a movie," answers Miner. "They have the money for advertising and the ability to line up an incredible number of theatres. But I guess it's too early to say. My answer would really have to be based on how much we have to cut in order to get the 'R' rating. It would obviously be a shame if whatever trimming we have to do ends up hurting *Friday the 13th Part II*. It would be sad not to release a film in its most effective form. But Paramount has brilliant marketing and they're the best people to distribute this picture. We'll have to wait and see."

One condition that might damage *Friday the 13th Part II* is *already* in the film. Throughout most of the picture, Jason wears an *Elephant Man*-type mask. Albeit Jason is supposed to terrify theatre crowds, his hood might make them giggle.

"That was an unfortunate coincidence," Steve concedes, "but we finished shooting right before *The Elephant Man* came out. The mask wasn't meant as a joke, so I hope people won't laugh at Jason. I don't think it will remind people of *The Elephant Man*, however, because the two films are so completely different."

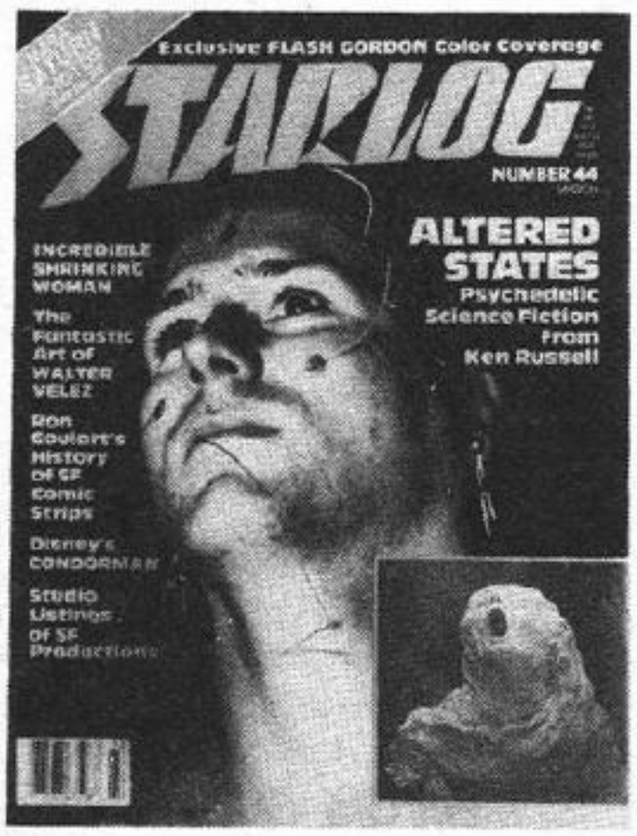
Since *Friday the 13th* was such a great success, if its sequel fails financially, the blame will be entirely levelled at Steve Miner. Since this is Miner's directorial debut, that could possibly stop his promising career.

"This is my break," comments Miner. "Wes Craven, Sean Cunningham and I all started out together on *Last House on the Left*, but this is *my* first major shot. I'll be judged on this film. I really wanted to do better than *Part I*, and I think I have. So far, I've been very fortunate in my professional life. But even if *Friday the 13th Part II* is a terrible bomb, which I know it won't be, it won't stop my career. I still have a lot of years ahead of me."



"There's a curse on this picture," Crazy Ralph (Walt Gorney) tells Steve Miner.

HERE IT IS!



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Knightriders

(Continued from page 19)

survive. The troupe keeps growing, and they're not making enough money to keep food on the table."

After hearing that brief description, we wondered whether the film might concern, to some extent, Romero's own efforts to maintain an independent status in a very tough business. "I think it does," Romero told us—almost as if the idea had only then occurred to him. "There is a lot of me in the script, and I'd be lying if I said I didn't identify with the characters, and with the character of the King. Trying to maintain some kind of ethic and individuality, despite the world at large, is really what the film is about."

When we later saw the film, it didn't seem a little autobiographical—it seemed a *lot* autobiographical. During the film itself, the viewer is totally enveloped by the world of *The Knightriders*, but, not long after the lights came back on, the associations began to be made. Yes, Sir William could be viewed as Romero, the King of the Independents (which is exactly the phrase once used by John Carpenter to describe Romero), determined to see things his own way, regardless of the hardships. But if you take that view, you must see the other side—Morgan as Romero the Entertainer, pleased by the cheers of the crowd, the rewards of a good business deal, and perhaps even a bit tempted by the glitter and gaudiness of show-biz success. In Romero, these two are integrated into a single filmmaker—a situation that is certainly implied in the events that occur in *Knightriders'* closing scenes.

There is a point at which the autobiographical aspect ends, however. "I'm not a biker," Romero shamelessly confesses, "and I can't really say that I'm into motorcycle films. I liked *The Wild One*, and there were a couple of others that I thought were OK. But the film really started five years ago with the idea that I would do a straight nitty-gritty medieval period piece. But I couldn't sell that idea for beanstalk beans. I got frustrated, and at some point someone said to me, why don't you put them on motorcycles and add a rock score, as a *joke*. That put a seed in my head.

"At first I thought it would be a rebellious thing; they'd be vigilantes. I had all kinds of ideas for a couple of years, until I decided which way I wanted to go with it."

As previously noted, the script in its final form was one that was utterly dependent on an expert cast to carry it off. For this purpose auditions were held in Los Angeles and New York; a number of major names were considered for the lead roles, and subsequently rejected. But, while none of the actors are "stars," fans of Romero will spot a few familiar faces, including Scott Reiniger and Ken Foree of *Dawn of the Dead* and John Amplas of *Martin*. Most familiar to readers of FANGORIA will be Tom Savini, who has been the subject of three previous feature articles in these pages.

Ed Harris is superlative at portraying the starry-eyed idealism and furious fanaticism of Sir William, even managing to make this paragon of virtue and dedication *likeable*, but Savini's is our favorite performance in a film that is quite crowded with acting talent. Seeing Savini on the screen as Morgan is a slightly disorienting experience for those who know him. Morgan's no-bull attitude, his relaxed good

Regular readers of these parting words know just how accurate Howard Cruse's illustration is—sometimes it does take psychic powers to accurately predict what you'll be seeing in our next issue's pages. But here's what's most likely to appear in lucky #13, our second anniversary issue: *The Wolfen*, Orion Pictures' tale of mutant, super-intelligent wolves, is planned for major coverage—we've already gotten in touch with makeup artist Carl Fullerton, and we're currently pursuing director Michael Wadleigh; we're hot on the trail of effects artist Chris Walas for the behind-the-scenes story of the Paramount-Disney coproduction *Dragonslayer*; P.J. Soles of *Halloween*, *Carrie* and *Rock 'n' Roll High School*, will reign as the issue's Fantasy Film Femme Fatale; Michael Caine speaks with FANGORIA about *Dressed To Kill*, *The Hand* and the forthcoming *Deathtrap*; Ron Goulart continues to trace the history of horror comics; and Mick Farren, SF writer and rock journalist, looks at the darker side of rock—from Screamin' Jay Hawkins to The Cramps. Also in the works for future issues are interviews with 3 of everyone's favorites—Tom Savini, George Romero and John Carpenter! Of course, all of this depends on the reliability of Count Fangor's crystal ball; all we can say for sure is, it's gonna be *dynamite!* See you then!

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Savini the matinee idol strikes a typically noble pose.

A highly-trained stunt-baby prepares to dodge an onrushing motorcycle. (Actually there's a trick involved—Want to guess what it is?)

nature, and his slightly devilish turn of mind are all Savini traits—except that Savini has never seemed to us as relaxed in an interview situation as he is performing before Romero's camera.

"Hopefully, if an actor's doing a good job, he's able to be himself *and* the character," says Savini. "When you're watching that screen, the people you can identify with are the people whose acting doesn't get in the way. You don't *see* the acting, really, because they're believing what they're doing—and if *they* believe it, *you* believe it . That's the actor's job—to put *you* in the Knightrider's situation, to make you the Black Knight, or the King, or whatever, because that's why you're in the theater, to have the *Knightriders* experience."

Savini first learned about *Knightriders* a little over a year ago, when Romero showed him an early treatment.

"I said George, listen, when you get to casting this part, all I want is a chance to read for it," recalls Savini. "All I wanted was the chance to read, and then it would be the *ultimate dream* if I got it.

"Then George went out to L.A. and read a lot of people out there. Then he came back to Pittsburgh, and before he went to New York for final casting, he cast me as Morgan—so I was the first person cast in the film! In fact, he told me then that he had wirtten it with me in mind—an honor beyond words!"

Savini's work as stuntman, special makeups artist and actor is no doubt familiar to our readers. This issue, we were hoping to announce Savini's debut in yet another filmmaking role—directing! William Friedkin, the director of *The Exorcist*, was recently in negotiations for Savini to direct a film, which Friedkin would produce, to be budgeted at $1.5 million—but *Creepshow*, the first collaboration between Stephen King and George Romero, is tentatively scheduled to start shooting this July. Romero offered Savini the opportunity to take on the film's makeup effects duties—and Savini turned down the directing deal in favor of the makeup assignment. "I guess I just have to call it loyalty," says Savini. "George has done an awful lot for me.

"*Creepshow* will be a lot of work—four months to develop a lot of effects; not just blood effects, but a lot of creatures as well."

Romero also had a few words to say about *Creepshow*, particularly on the possibility of making the film in 3-D.

"It still hasn't been finally determined whether we'll do it in 3-D or not," Romero says. "When Steve and I first talked about *Creepshow*, we talked about a very very mixed bag. When we first dreamed up the idea of an anthology film we wanted all of the stories to be completely different, stylistically. One black & white 1940s-style, one 3-D—even changing the screen format from a small, squarish screen to a wide screen, really mixing it up like that.

"Then we arrived at the comic book concept, and we decided to capture a comic book style, and keep it uniform, so 3-D really wouldn't fit.

"The only reason that the 3-D idea surfaced again recently is that the people who are financing the film own the Todd-AO Twin 70 3-D system. We went out to look at it, and talk to the people who developed it. It's a gorgeous process, but it's not something you can schlepp around the country—they intend to use it as an 'event.'

"Everyone's gotten into the head now that we've *got* to pry people away from their home video centers. So 3-D, or anything that can't be achieved on that home video system, is something that people are starting to get excited about.

"I don't know if the system they have will be successful or not, but their feeling is that, even if it's only in 20 or 30 markets, if an event is made of it, it will draw heavily in those 30 markets. And, coming out of that situation, you have 60 70-millimeter flat prints for distribution, because they don't build filtration in, and they don't print both halves on a single strand, they literally just hang the Polaroid filters in front of the twin projector lenses."

While Romero admits that he is anxious to make a 3-D film *someday*, there seems to be a good chance he will decide against 3-D for *Creepshow*, which, as an anthology of several short stories in a single film, is already sufficiently complex. Aside from the bulkiness of the Twin-70 cameras (which Romero describes as "the Guns of Navarrone"), 3-D poses a stylistic problem for Romero. The director has been cited in the past for his editing style, which depends to some extent on rapid cutting that stresses the action element in his movies. In 3-D films, such cutting can require a lot of refocussing by the viewer, as the object of attention moves from one plane of depth to another, resulting in eye fatigue and "3-D headache." Most of the best 3-D films of the 50s got around this problem by using longer takes, and keeping the camera more or less static—a good approach for filmed stage plays like *Dial M For Murder* or *Kiss Me Kate* but not the route Romero would like to take. Should he take on a 3-D film, Romero plans to keep his editing style, and is prepared to plan his shots meticulously in order to match the depth-planes of each shot in each sequence. "I could see myself out there shooting for two years trying to get shots that match properly," Romero says. Unfortunately, Romero does not have a leisurely schedule for *Creepshow*, and, as we write, he is hoping for a chance to experiment with the Twin-70 equipment for a few days, in order to determine whether 3-D might be a practical choice for the film.

Whatever his choice, Romero seems fascinated by the prospect of working in 3-D, and his other projects, *The Invasion of The Spaghetti Monsters*, *Day of The Dead* and *The Stand*, all seem like good subjects for 3-D. Who knows? Perhaps the next zombie you see will be sitting in your lap!

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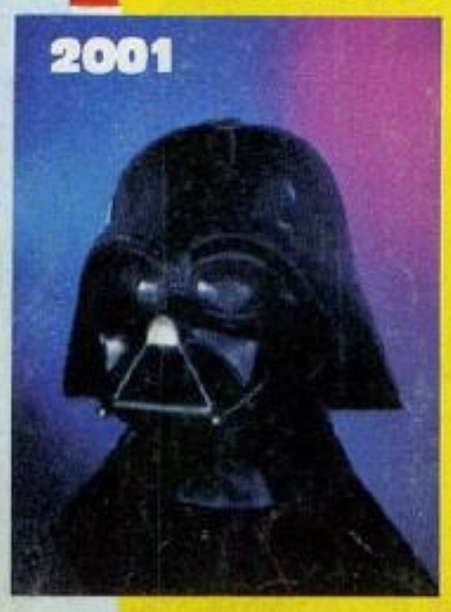

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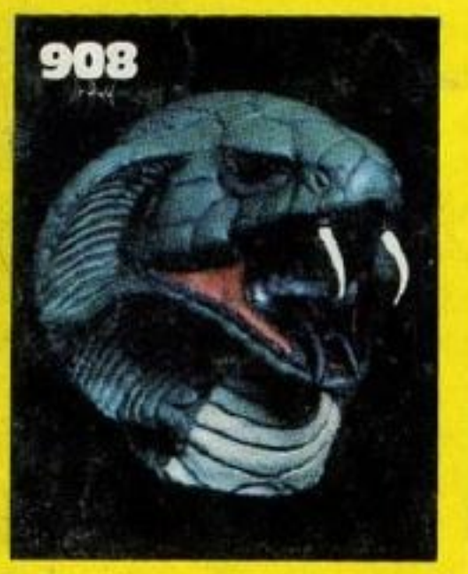

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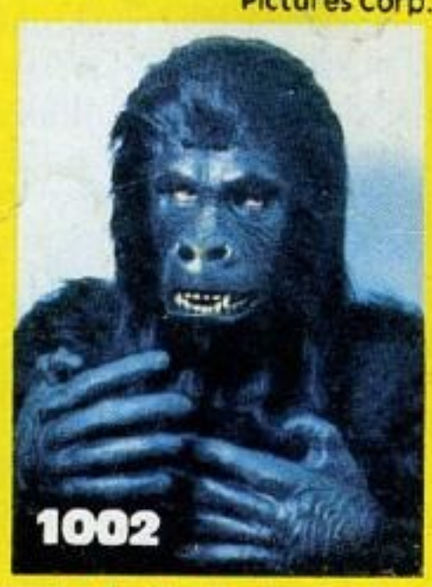

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